

OLYMPIODORUS  
COMMENTARY ON  
PLATO'S *GORGIAS*

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ROBIN JACKSON, KIMON LYCOS  
AND HAROLD TARRANT (TRS., EDS.)

OLYMPIODORUS  
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TRANSLATED WITH FULL NOTES

BY

ROBIN JACKSON, KIMON LYCOS

AND

HAROLD TARRANT

INTRODUCTION BY

HAROLD TARRANT



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## TO THE MEMORY OF KIM

KIMON LYCOS: 1933-1995

*Kimón Lycos was born in Alexandria, Egypt. His family migrated to Australia in 1951, and he studied philosophy at the University of Sydney and at St. Catherine's College, Oxford. He taught at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the University of New South Wales, Sydney, before appointment in 1965 as Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the Australian National University, Canberra. He resigned from the ANU in 1988 to move to Melbourne, where he taught at the University of Melbourne until his death. He has held many short-term appointments at other universities in Australia, the UK, France, and the USA. Besides his numerous articles in philosophical journals, he was author of Plato on Justice and Power, and editor (with Janet Anderson and Graham Cullum) of Art and Reality: John Anderson on Literature and Aesthetics.*



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## PREFACE

Work was begun on this translation in 1990 with the assistance from the Australian Research Council Small Grants Scheme administered by the University of Sydney and then subsequently by the University of Melbourne. The wider project aimed to look at the ancient interpretation of the less dogmatic dialogues of Plato which were once labelled 'zetetic', a task which was bound to involve Olympiodorus as the author of extant commentaries on two of these works. The initial task was to involve the *Gorgias* and concentrate on achieving a thorough appreciation of Olympiodorus' lectures on it: an appreciation which the production of an annotated translation was sure to enhance. It was an early conviction that this commentary would yield up much more of interest than might have been suggested by the dismissive comments of some modern scholars, particularly when tackled by a team whose primary interests centred neither on Byzantium nor on Neoplatonism, but rather on the Platonic texts and what they can mean for different generations.

Equal responsibility was taken by the three translators in the initial stages, and all have contributed something to the notes. More importantly we benefited greatly from each other's different insights and approaches when we were able to come together for joint discussions. Considerable effort was also put into the background tasks by Michael Curran as part-time research assistant, who deserves special thanks. The project was set back somewhat by unforeseen factors: delicate problems at Ormond College, University of Melbourne, which took up much of Jackson's time, health problems which hindered Lycos, and distractions involved in Tarrant's move to the University of Newcastle, NSW, in 1993. Thereafter Jackson left for the UK and took up another career, while Lycos passed away late in 1995: not before he had published a significant article related to the project. This has left Tarrant with much of the responsibility for completing the notes, fine-tuning the translation, and contributing the introduction. However, early meetings, in which all three wrestled with particular difficulties raised by portions of text, have been a crucial factor in coming to understand this commentary, and have determined the overall

form that our work would take. For those interested in Lycos' contribution, many of the longer notes in the earlier lectures concerned with Callicles preserve what is essentially his material.

The Australian Research Council, the University of Sydney, and the University of Melbourne are thanked here for their financial support of the project. We are grateful that, by permission of Oxford University Press, we have used extracts from T. Irwin (trans. and ed.), Plato: *Gorgias*, Oxford Clarendon Plato Series, 1979. Thanks are also due to the Faculty of Classics at the University of Cambridge, for it was thanks to their hospitality that the final manuscript could be prepared in an atmosphere conducive to study. The number of persons whose interest and assistance deserves recognition is sufficiently large to preclude the naming of individuals, but we should like to offer a general 'thank you' to colleagues in both Philosophy and Classics, usually in Australia and New Zealand, who have commented on oral papers connected with this project, and to some who have commented upon our written work as anonymous referees. Thanks is also due to the Editors of *Philosophia Antiqua* for some helpful and perceptive comments on parts of the translation and on the introduction at an earlier stage.

H.A.S.T and K.R.J.  
University of Newcastle, N.S.W.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. *The Alexandrian School*

Olympiodorus was one of a series of Alexandrian commentators who have left us their work on texts of classical Greek philosophy. The Alexandrians, the inheritors of several centuries of vigorous and extensive commentary and discussion of philosophical and learned texts, especially the dialogues of Plato, were the last major school of Greek philosophical speculation in antiquity.

Platonism had a long history at Alexandria, with significant contributions to the development of Jewish and Christian theology in the early centuries AD, and occasionally violent clashes between pagan and Christian forces, as in the death of Hypatia in the early fifth century.<sup>1</sup> For Olympiodorus' period, the late Alexandrian school, the significant beginning is probably with Hermeias in the fifth century AD.<sup>2</sup> Like that giant among Neoplatonists, Proclus, Hermeias had been taught at Athens by Syrianus,<sup>3</sup> and his commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* is generally considered to preserve faithfully the interpretation of his master. Hermeias seems to have established himself securely at Alexandria, and when he died (some time before 470) his son Ammonius was destined for his official position in the city, and his widow Aedesia was able to bring him to Athens for lessons with Proclus himself. During this time it seems that the city authorities continued to pay the professor's salary to Aedesia.<sup>4</sup>

Syrianus and Proclus were in our view powerful influences on the late Alexandrians, and the lines of Proclan interpretations may be discerned behind many of Olympiodorus' and the

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<sup>1</sup> Dam. *V.Isid.* 104, Socr. *Eccl.Hist.* 7.14.5.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the Alexandrian school of Platonists, see Westerink (1962), (1964), (1990), Marrou (1963), Hadot I. (1978), Aujoulat (1986), Verrycken (1990a, 1990b), Blumenthal (1996). Debate continues on the extent to which the Alexandrians preserved the heritage of mainstream Athenian Neoplatonism, and the possibility that they were influenced rather by pre-Plotinian forces.

<sup>3</sup> Dam. *V.Isid.* 119-122.

<sup>4</sup> Dam. *V.Isid.* 124, on which see n. 65. Westerink (1976, p.24) calls this measure 'unheard-of'.

Alexandrians' critical positions. But the Alexandrians were somewhat less enthusiastic than the Athenians in the construction of elaborate spiritual classifications (henads, triads, and the like), and besides, the admiration of Proclus' students and their successors did not entail uncritical preservation of his doctrines. Proclus' interpretation of the *Parmenides*, the corner-stone of his theology, was abandoned at Athens by Marinus in favour of another attributed to the physician-philosopher Galen,<sup>5</sup> and at best toned down at Alexandria under Ammonius, whose theology seems to have been so constructed as to accord better with the tastes of Christians.<sup>6</sup> It was also, perhaps, more Aristotelian, and in general Ammonius seems to have concentrated on the interpretation of Aristotle rather than that of Plato.

Ammonius, Olympiodorus' own teacher, was probably born between 445 and 435, and died between 517 (when Philoponus made available his *Physics* lectures) and 526 (for Damascius speaks of him as if he were dead).<sup>7</sup> Like many Greek philosophers he preferred oral discourse, and left chiefly his students, their work, and their records of *his* work, as testimony to his achievement.<sup>8</sup> Ammonius' lectures have been preserved to a greater or lesser degree by his students: Philoponus (in his earlier works) and Asclepius preserve the general thrust of some of his Aristotelian lectures, and Damascius and Olympiodorus frequently refer to him.<sup>9</sup> Ammonius is probably responsible for taking the Alexandrians in the direction of a less highly structured theology than that of the Athenian School. It has been disputed whether this results from an independent desire to harmonize the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, or a more pragmatic need to adapt philosophy to be more

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<sup>5</sup> Dam. *V.Isid.* 244.

<sup>6</sup> See Westerink (1976), pp. 24-25. We do not assume that Ammonius deliberately devised his philosophy in such a way as to be acceptable to Christians, in spite of the intriguing reference in Damascius (*V.Isid.* 316) to a deal between Ammonius and the local bishop. Verrycken (1990a) adequately answers accounts of Ammonius which depict him surrendering his heritage to suit his political ends.

<sup>7</sup> See Westerink (1962), x-xi; for fuller discussion of Ammonius see Westerink (1990), xi-xvi.

<sup>8</sup> There were some short treatises of his own and a commentary on the *De Interpretatione* that survives, apart from records of his lectures taken by others. For Ol.'s own survey of the measures of a teacher's work, which emphasizes pupils, see 40.5.

<sup>9</sup> Dam. *V.Isid.* 128; Olympiodorus, *In Grg.* 39.2, etc.



acceptable to Christian tastes.<sup>10</sup> We believe that both factors are in fact relevant. Concentration on Aristotle may itself have been encouraged by Christian hostility to Platonist theology as presented by Proclus. It is significant that neither Ammonius nor Olympiodorus is known to have lectured on the four 'theological' works in the Platonist curriculum: *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Philebus*, *Parmenides*.

We should not assume more than there is evidence for regarding Olympiodorus himself. He used to be confused with the Christian writer of the same name, though it is clear that our author is no Christian.<sup>11</sup> He was probably born between 495 and 505, and was still lecturing in 565 or slightly after.<sup>12</sup> This implies a long career. Indeed the *Gorgias*-commentary has been placed as early as 525,<sup>13</sup> but this is mostly guesswork, especially in view of the likely lateness of the *Alcibiades*-commentary.<sup>14</sup> There is no direct evidence that he was teaching that early, and indeed, if we follow Verrycken (1990b) and others in dating Philoponus' rejection of key tenets of Ammonian Neoplatonism to 529, then it might very well be that Olympiodorus had only just succeeded Eutocius as leader of the Alexandrian 'school', and that Philoponus (who had previously had a high profile, and whose intellect must then have outstripped that of his rival) had felt this as *either* a slight to himself *or* a step back towards both overt paganism and the domination of Plato.

In favour of the same early date for our commentary, it has been argued that it is less philosophically profound, and this may be explained in terms of immaturity. However, philosophically profundity has tended to be measured in terms of the degree of heavily abstract theorising common in Proclus and Damascius. In our view, differences in this regard can be explained in other ways, to do with a mode of engagement with the text or with differences in the target audience. Olympiodorus comments on a text with ethical rather than metaphysical relevance before an

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<sup>10</sup> See Verrycken (1990a), pp. 200-204, 226-231; it should be emphasized that Verrycken does not see Ammonius as straying far from the heritage of Proclus, though he correctly resists the view that Ammonius' Platonic teaching might have been more overtly Proclan.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Westerink (1962), xv.

<sup>12</sup> On the basis of *In Mete.* p. 51.30ff.; the commentary on the *Alcibiades* is less than a decade earlier.

<sup>13</sup> Westerink (1976), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Cameron (1969), p. 12.

audience which is itself new to Plato; he may have had less high-quality prior scholarship to draw on for the *Gorgias* than for the *Alcibiades* or the *Phaedo*.

## 2. *The Significance of Olympiodorus*

Olympiodorus is of interest for the historian of philosophy. Given the lack of originality in Hermeias' *Phaedrus*-commentary, which is simply a faithful report of the views of his teacher Syrianus, Olympiodorus is the only significant witness to the approach to Plato taught at Alexandria in the late Neoplatonic period. Besides his own lectures on the *Alcibiades* I,<sup>15</sup> *Gorgias* and *Phaedo*, it is clear that both the anonymous *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* and the extensive scholia on the *Gorgias* are very heavily influenced by Olympiodorus. His lectures on Aristotle's *Categories* and *Meteorologica* are also preserved, as also are certain lectures on Paulus of Alexandria sometimes attributed to him, and those on Zosimus Kat' *Energeian* which, even if his work, contribute little to our present study.<sup>16</sup> Those members of the school who follow him, Elias, David, and Stephanus, besides bringing it into a new Christian phase, reverted more to the study of Aristotle.

We believe that Olympiodorus' Platonic commentaries are the works of his that are of special interest. In the first place they preserve Neoplatonist commentary on the more elementary Platonic works of the post-Iamblichan Neoplatonist curriculum, the *Alcibiades*, *Gorgias* and *Phaedo*, those dialogues normally read first, second, and third with pupils. Secondly they include two of Plato's works (*Alcibiades*, *Gorgias*), which were considered 'exploratory' (*zetetic*), i.e. less dedicated to the expounding of doctrine than many works in the curriculum, and which develop in a manner tailored to the nature of the interlocutor(s) being tackled. No other works in the Neoplatonist curriculum routinely employ the Socratic *elenchus*.<sup>17</sup> All the other works in the Neoplatonist curriculum,

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<sup>15</sup> This dialogue, not universally agreed to be from Plato's own hand, will normally be described simply as *Alcibiades* (or *Alc.*) in the present volume.

<sup>16</sup> Westerink (1976), pp. 21-23; Warnon (1967) on 'Heliodorus'.

<sup>17</sup> *Theaetetus* is surely different in that Socrates contributes so much theory of his own for scrutiny, and even while *Theaetetus* is interlocutor it is never his inadequacies which are being exposed but those of his 'offspring'. Where *Republic* is included in the curriculum one will find *elenchus* in the first book.

apart from the *Theaetetus* on which Olympiodorus may also have commented,<sup>18</sup> would have been regarded as 'expository' (*hyphegetic*) by most ancient Platonists.<sup>19</sup> A work regarded as other than a simple vehicle for doctrine imposes a greater need to consider its purpose, structure, etc, and permits a wider range of possibilities for the interpreter.

Of Olympiodorus' extant Plato commentaries, the *Alcibiades* and *Phaedo* were able to draw on a much richer interpretative history than the *Gorgias*.<sup>20</sup> The *Phaedo* and *Alcibiades* concerned the soul's nature and immortality, themes of central concern to Neoplatonists. The *Alcibiades* was seen as something of a model of Socratic education, containing *elenctic*, *protreptic*, and *maieutic* elements, as well as introducing the student to his inner self in the third part. In contrast to this work's constructive image, the *Gorgias* had regularly been seen as a polemical work designed to overturn the views expounded by rival educators, and it featured prominently in the rivalry between orators and philosophers. The *Gorgias* also had much overtly political subject-matter, which was not a principal concern of Neoplatonists, and may have made it a more sensitive work for open discussion.

Despite its length, Olympiodorus' discussion often seems cramped and arbitrary—an impression perhaps exaggerated by its being in the form of notes taken by a student—rarely grappling in depth with the problems that are familiar from *modern* discussion. Hence the quality of his work has often been questioned, but usually because he fails to supply what philosophers and scholars are themselves seeking. It is not entirely fair to judge the commentary by what it adds to *our* understanding of the *Gorgias*,<sup>21</sup> and much fairer to ask what he might be contributing towards his own students' understanding and enjoyment of the work. It is also instructive for a modern reader of Plato to appreciate how a work like the *Gorgias* could be understood in a different age, and we

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Note that Ol., following a division which probably goes back to Iamblichus (Dillon, 1973, p. 231), regards only the first part of *Alc.* (to 119a) as being *elenctic*, *In Alc.* 11.

<sup>18</sup> See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, Dodge (1970), p. 593; the title here is disputed. We know also of Olympiodorus' lectures on the *Sophist*, *In Alc.* 110.

<sup>19</sup> Though Albinus in the second century seems to have regarded the logical works too (*Crat.*, *Sph.*, *Plt.*, *Prm.*) as 'zetetic', anon. *Prol.* 6.

<sup>20</sup> The *Alcibiades* had been the first work in the curriculum not only since Iamblichus but even in the second-century programme of Albinus (*Prol.* 5).

<sup>21</sup> As perhaps Dodds (1959), p. 59.

believe there are respects in which Olympiodorus' reading of the work anticipates modern concerns.

Olympiodorus' work is also interesting insofar as he was an openly pagan teacher who was apparently able to practice within a suspicious and occasionally hostile Christian environment, although not without some concerns.<sup>22</sup> He was able to continue his activities after the measures taken by Justinian to suppress pagan teaching (chiefly at Athens) in 529.<sup>23</sup> The Alexandrians' less defiantly pagan stance, as witnessed by their relative lack of interest in metaphysical system-building, may have helped. So too there may have been greater astuteness and political sensitivity, and a more accommodating attitude to Christianity, facilitated by such moves as Olympiodorus' strong emphasis on shared intuitions.<sup>24</sup> At any rate the style of Neoplatonist exegesis associated with Olympiodorus continued to be practiced after his death by scholars who were themselves Christians.

### 3. *Olympiodorus' Exegetical Approach*

Tarrant has argued elsewhere (1997b) that the name of Olympiodorus often prompts images that he would not himself have thought appropriate. The term 'Neoplatonist' is an example: like others of his school Olympiodorus did not think of himself as an adherent of any *new* or revised kind of Platonism. His study of the works of Plato aimed to bring them to life for his own students. He had no special sense of allegiance to Plotinus, whom we regard as the founder of Neoplatonism: Plotinus is mentioned a mere three times in the *Gorgias*-commentary, once in the *Alcibiades*-commentary, and three times in the *Phaedo*-commentary. It was the vision of Plato that Olympiodorus was trying to recreate.<sup>25</sup> Even so, the term 'Platonist' was not strictly accurate. There was no difference, as far as he was concerned, between Platonist philosophy and

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<sup>22</sup> Note the cautious and pessimistic personal remark at 45.2.

<sup>23</sup> On the so-called 'closing of the Academy at Athens' see Cameron (1969), Glucker (1978), pp. 322-29, Blumenthal (1978), Athanassiadi (1993).

<sup>24</sup> See below, section 4, on the 'common notions'.

<sup>25</sup> Note how Ol. is interested in the details of Plato's life, as can be seen in the biography in *In Alc.* and probably from the related biography in the anonymous *Prolegomena*; these are interesting for their differences from the rest of the biographical tradition.

philosophy itself.<sup>26</sup> Other early philosophers—especially Pythagoras but also the Eleatics, and Presocratics such as Empedocles—had achieved a greater or lesser appreciation of the Platonic vision.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Olympiodorus regards Aristotle as committed to the same philosophical principles as Plato. This is an odd idea to modern readers of Aristotle, but is one with a long history, going back to the close of the hellenistic period, and particularly to Antiochus of Ascalon.<sup>28</sup> Indeed in late Platonism, it looks as though Aristotle is regarded as the best introduction to Plato, for his works are read first as preliminary, technical introductions to the inspired writings of Plato.<sup>29</sup> Ammonius seems to have made Aristotelian works the focus at Alexandria, in contrast to the Athenians' concentration on Plato—which makes Olympiodorus' Plato commentaries the more valuable. But there are also frequent stoic elements in Olympiodorus: Epictetus is one of Olympiodorus' favourite moral authorities, and a view ascribed to Chrysippus in one lecture appears in another as that of 'the philosopher'.<sup>30</sup> Only Epicureans and sceptics seem to be outside the fold of philosophy.<sup>31</sup> Like his contemporaries', Olympiodorus' conception of philosophy reflects a synthesis of Greek learning. It even includes Homer and the Greek poets, whose insight into the secrets of philosophy may be extracted from their writings by means of allegory. It is a reasonable inference from the frequency of Olympiodorus' remarks that various non-philosophical studies, such as mathematics, medicine, and apparently rhetoric too, formed part of the activities of the school.<sup>32</sup> The role of a figure like Olympiodorus, it seems, is to preserve, explain, and pass on the wisdom of his tradition.

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<sup>26</sup> See for instance 47.2.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Mueller (1992), drawing on the introduction to Proc. *Theol.*, p.xiv: 'According to this account, the philosophy of Plato—that is the truth—was understood in an imperfect way by unnamed early philosophers, and expressed in a perfect way by Plato.' See also Mansfeld (1992).

<sup>28</sup> See for instance Dillon (1977), 52-106.

<sup>29</sup> Compare Proclus' studies (Marinus, *V.Proc.*) and the order of teaching at Alexandria (below, p. 11).

<sup>30</sup> Contrast 2.2 with 12.1.

<sup>31</sup> There is no reference to either in this commentary, but one finds a hostile attitude to those called 'Democriteans' at *In Alc.* 92, and efforts are made to counter suggestions of a link between Plato and scepticism, *In Grg.* 36.7 and note.

<sup>32</sup> For the evidence for non-philosophical studies, see Westerink (1973), pp. 26-27. That for rhetoric is merely circumstantial, and based largely on what can be inferred from *In Grg.*

We shall be concerned here primarily with Olympiodorus' interpretation of Plato. Fortunately Elias (*In Cat.* 122-3) records some rules for the interpreter of ancient texts, which seem to reflect established practice within the school. The two chief principles are that one should not be so dedicated to the views of the single author before him that the truth is overlooked, a view linked with Ammonius in the present commentary (41.9); and that one should base one's interpretation upon a corpus, not upon a single dialogue, which is a tactic clearly followed here insofar as the *Gorgias* is interpreted always in conjunction with the *Phaedrus* (on rhetoric) and with the *Republic* (on the soul and its virtues), as well as a variety of other Platonic dialogues. Again one can see that Olympiodorus has acquired this practice from Ammonius (32.2).

One may hesitate to use the term 'philosopher' for one whose activities were strictly linked with the exegesis of texts already ancient.<sup>33</sup> But we see Olympiodorus as not only a commentator but also a teacher, a role which frequently comes to the fore.<sup>34</sup> Moral messages which he extracts sometimes from the wider Platonic context,<sup>35</sup> sometimes from brief phrases in their dramatic context,<sup>36</sup> are frequent in the earlier lectures of this commentary: less so in that on *Alcibiades*; this perhaps reflects a tendency to play down his role as a moral teacher after Justinian's measures to suppress pagan teaching.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. *Keeping ancient Greece alive in a Christian World*

An important mission of Olympiodorus was to keep alive the memory of Greek history and cultural achievement, above all that of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.<sup>38</sup> Even the most elementary knowledge of fifth-century politics, for instance, was rare: Olympiodorus has to point out that Themistocles comes before Socrates, while Pericles was his contemporary (7.3). And Olympiodorus' fellow Alexandrian Philoponus, in his version of Ammonius'

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Westerink (1973), p. 23: 'a pliability so extreme indeed that it might be more correct to speak of a teaching routine than of a philosophy'.

<sup>34</sup> See 41.6, 42.3, 43.2; compare *In Alc.* 87-88, 133-34.

<sup>35</sup> 12.3, 17.6, 19.1, 31.4.

<sup>36</sup> 2.8, 3.4 x 3, 8.12, 15.9.

<sup>37</sup> Westerink (1973) p. 21; (1962) xv; Cameron (1969), p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> This is an abbreviated account of that given by Tarrant (1997b), 180-182.

lectures on the *Categories*, had made Heraclitus (*fl.* c.500BC) the student of the fourth-century sceptic Pyrrho, so even scholars could go well astray on chronology.<sup>39</sup> This error seems to have been the fault of the recorder, often, one may suppose, a senior student, as perhaps when Olympiodorus *appears* to be seeing Aristotle as a student of Socrates (41.3). We should bear in mind that problems and obscurities in texts such as Olympiodorus' *Commentaries* can result from a variety of causes: the lecturer's own imprecision, the recorder's error, transmission error, or combinations of the above.<sup>40</sup> Another example of a chronology problem in this commentary concerns the relative dates of Plato and Gorgias (0.9).<sup>41</sup> Olympiodorus' history is possibly much less sloppy than it appears at first sight, in spite of problems associated with the use of lectures somewhat inaccurately recorded by students.

Olympiodorus sees it as his duty to defend the reputation of famous historical characters by making their conduct conform as closely as possible to the standards of his own day. Hence the moral portraits that the Platonist biographer Plutarch sketches of figures such as Theseus and Lycurgus suit Olympiodorus better than conventional history, although we should also note his rejection of the historical accuracy of Greek legends. Well-known figures of fifth-century Greek history had to be defended in similar terms, even where Plato had criticized them. Similarly rhetoric and its practitioners cannot be condemned outright.<sup>42</sup> Drama fared less well.<sup>43</sup>

Olympiodorus' mission to promote and defend ancient Greek culture in general, and particularly its philosophical and scientific achievements, is not intended as a threat in any way to other cultures and philosophies, and in particular it is presented in such a way as to avoid giving offence to the Christian religion. Cultural coexistence in Alexandria had a long history,<sup>44</sup> and this was no

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<sup>39</sup> *In Cat.* p. 2.8-17 Busse. One must allow for possibility that the lecturer had been trying to make some valid point about the philosophical heritage.

<sup>40</sup> Westerink has much to say about note-takers' incompetence (1962), xxxvii-xl.

<sup>41</sup> See Tarrant (1997a).

<sup>42</sup> On Demosthenes, Lycurgus, and Isocrates see 1.13, 41.10, etc. Ol.'s defence of the four democratic leaders and of rhetoric in general is strikingly reminiscent of Proclus' defence of Homer against Socrates' criticisms in his extended discussion in *In Remp.*

<sup>43</sup> See Tarrant (1997b), 182-3.

<sup>44</sup> Even in the time of Hypatia, over a century before Olympiodorus' career

time to try to change that. Tarrant has linked Olympiodorus' apparent tolerance of Christianity with facets of his interpretation of Socrates and his understanding of Socratic method, and with his adoption of the Stoic and subsequently Platonist concept of common notions implanted by nature.<sup>45</sup>

The common notions had been taken over from the Stoics early in the history of Platonic exegesis, and linked with the objects of Platonic 'recollection', i.e. the Ideas, a connexion encouraged by the notion-terminology (έννο-...) in the treatment of recollection in the *Phaedo*. It is interesting that in the sixth century AD Olympiodorus was already providing the Socratic *elenchus* with an epistemological basis by assuming that the truth resided, at least potentially, in the soul of the interlocutor, and by founding it, like Vlastos (1983), on the authority of such passages as this in the *Gorgias*. The true propositions which Vlastos finds lurking at the back of the interlocutor's mind and which have the potential to refute other moral beliefs, are founded for Olympiodorus on these common notions. It is interesting to contrast Olympiodorus' attitude towards Polus (lecture 20) with Irwin's much more generous assessment: 'Overall, we might say that Polus' distinction between the fine and the beneficial is quite legitimate, and indeed even a central feature of morality, since he sees, or at least does not deny, that we may have reason to act morally even against our own interests.'<sup>46</sup> Evidently the 'common notions' of today do not accord with those of the ancient world.

An interesting illustration of Olympiodorus' confidence in the common notions as the foundations of knowledge is his belief that similar ideas can be expressed in very different language.<sup>47</sup> The

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as a lecturer, suppression of pagan philosophic and scientific studies had been less part of any Christian agenda than the suppression of its influence upon high-ranking Alexandrian life. Moreover it is clear that considerable numbers of Christians were interested in and supportive of the Platonic school's activities. Hypatia was a victim of struggles within the Christian community rather than of a struggle of Christians against others. See Dzielska (1995), 27-100.

<sup>45</sup> On these two issues see Tarrant (1997b), 185-8 and 188-90 respectively. No. 3 on the list of common notions there should perhaps not have been included; Jackson observes that it is dependent upon No.4, as one sees at 11.5. For the common notions in earlier Neoplatonism see Saffrey and Westerink (1968), pp. 159-61.

<sup>46</sup> Irwin (1979), p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> See 4.3 and 47.2-4 on the names of the pagan gods; *In Alc.* 21-23 on Socrates' *daimonion*.



willingness to hunt for a deeper meaning in both poetic and philosophic texts could be extended to deeper meanings in Christianity or in traditional Egyptian religion. Olympiodorus did not do this, naturally enough, for, in addition to placing him in further danger, it would have impeded his mission as a Hellenist.

Olympiodorus maintains opposition to Christian doctrine on a variety of issues, refusing, for example, to accept eternal punishment or arguing that suicide can sometimes be justified,<sup>48</sup> but ultimately he must be reckoned as accommodating in general terms to the Christian outlook. His position has been characterized as one of 'extreme pliability'.<sup>49</sup> But extreme pliability of doctrine, coupled with a firm belief in certain principles, was a characteristic of Socrates too. Olympiodorus lacked Socrates' profundity, but shared his predecessor's ability to rise above technical details of doctrine. He may ultimately have smoothed the transition to a fundamentally Christian Platonism at Alexandria.

### 5. *The Curriculum*

The Neoplatonist curriculum had been developing since the days when Iamblichus instituted a canon of Platonic dialogues. By Olympiodorus' time, at least, it did not open with Platonic studies, but began by familiarising students with the elements of philosophy and the *Organon* of Aristotle. His master Ammonius established a programme for the Alexandrian school: beginning with Porphyry's *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories*, students embarked on Aristotelian logic, studied primarily through his *Categories*. They would read a life of Aristotle, discuss the various philosophical sects, the works of Aristotle, the basic requirements for the Aristotelian interpreter, and so on.<sup>50</sup> Because Aristotle was already familiar, Olympiodorus' Plato commentaries treat such

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Westerink (1962), xvii-xviii.

<sup>49</sup> Westerink (1976), p.23. The same pliability may be detected in Ammonius. As Verrycken (1990a, 222) says: 'This means that one can consider Aristotle's God, according to one's point of view, either as the Neoplatonic Good or as the Neoplatonic divine Intellect.' Ammonius appears to have been able to take a more unitary view of the world above Soul or to apply precise distinctions depending on the demands of a context, and that is where Olympiodorus' pliability is most in evidence.

<sup>50</sup> See I. Hadot (1978, p. 149), (1990 intro.).

matters as Aristotle's categories and his syllogistic figures as already understood.<sup>51</sup> A general introduction to Plato may also have been read, though probably less full than the surviving *Prolegomena*—for this work contains an extensive life of Plato, whereas Olympiodorus' treatment of the first work of the curriculum itself includes a life in the long second chapter, a pointless exercise if the student had already encountered similar material.

The initial words of Olympiodorus' *Alcibiades-Commentary* lead nicely away from the study of Aristotle towards that of Plato. Aristotle's remark that all men naturally desire knowledge is read as the claim that all naturally desire *Plato's* philosophy—they want to receive the goodness and inspiration which proceeds from that philosophy. Inspiration (*enthousiasmos*) seems here to mean allowing some higher voice to operate through oneself, and four examples are given from Plato's work.<sup>52</sup> Plato is thus seen as somebody through whose works higher voices may speak. The *vita* reinforces this impression by emphasizing the link between Plato and Apollo. Because Platonists were interested in symbolic meaning rather than concrete physical significance, there is no attempt to claim that Apollo was Plato's actual father, as there had been even in fourth century Athens.<sup>53</sup> The important message for the student is that Plato is a philosopher who is also a spokesman for the god.

Plato was not always held in such supreme regard in Neoplatonism, for the Platonism represented by philosophers such as Iamblichus saw itself as returning to the thought of *Pythagoras* rather than that of Plato.<sup>54</sup> Their inclination for a religiously grounded philosophy, seen in the views of such groups as the priests of Egypt or the Magi as well as in Pythagoras' true but elusive doctrine, led to an attempt to separate off the Socratic element in Plato as something inferior and dangerously inconclusive (*aporetic*),<sup>55</sup> leaving behind whatever preserved the true

<sup>51</sup> Garbled syllogistic should be attributed rather to poor recording and greater flexibility in the rules than to the lecturer's incompetence, see Tarrant (1997c).

<sup>52</sup> *Tim.* 41-42: Plato speaks as the demiurge himself; *Rep.* 546a ff.: he takes the part of the Muses; *Phdr.* 238-41: he takes the part of the nymphs; *Tht.* 173-7: he takes the part of the ideal philosopher.

<sup>53</sup> Speusippus, frs. 1a and 1b (Tarán).

<sup>54</sup> See D. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived* (Oxford, 1987).

<sup>55</sup> Compare Numenius, fr. 24.57ff. (des Places), who sees Plato's Socratic caution as the thing that allowed Arcesilaus to claim Plato's authority for his

spirit of ancient revelation afforded to Pythagoras. For the Iamblichans Platonic education was not so much the goal of education as a step towards some more ancient goal. Aristotle was less of an ally, and was frequently criticized for deserting the true tradition—as allegedly represented by such works as Archytas *On the Categories* or Timaeus Locrus *On the World-Soul and on Nature*.

For the Alexandrian school, however, Platonic education was a goal in itself, and Aristotle a consistent ally in the approach to that goal. The rehabilitation of Aristotle clearly owed much to Ammonius, who seems to have specialized in that area, although the increasing importance of Plato as against Pythagoras is already visible in Proclus, doyen of the Athenian school. These later Platonists nevertheless continued to follow the sequence of dialogues prescribed by Iamblichus with a view to reviving a *Pythagorean* vision of Platonism. Of the Platonic works required for his educational programme, only the *Theaetetus* ends in the inconclusive way we associate with Plato's 'Socratic' works, and the *Theaetetus* is by no means a typical example. Iamblichus seems not to have been interested in Socrates' teaching methods, only in the doctrine which he or other Platonic characters expound.<sup>56</sup> All the later dialogues, *Critias* and to a degree *Laws* being excepted, feature at one stage or another in the post-Iamblichan programme, including those which use Pythagoreans or Eleatics as main speakers.

The first ten dialogues in the programme, with their supposed areas of relevance, were as follows:<sup>57</sup>

1. <i>Alcibiades</i>	self-knowledge	physical
2. <i>Gorgias</i>	the constitutional virtues	physical
3. <i>Phaedo</i>	the purificatory virtues	physical
4. <i>Cratylus</i>	knowledge of reality via names	physical
5. <i>Theaetetus</i>	knowledge of reality via ?things?	physical
6. <i>Sophist</i>	purpose unclear	physical
7. <i>Politicus</i>	purpose unclear	physical

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scepticism.

<sup>56</sup> Only three works in Iamblichus' teaching programme seem to offer much insight into Socratic methods, *Alc.* (first), *Grg.* (second) and *Thl.* (fifth).

<sup>57</sup> The table is based on a lacunose passage of *anon. Prol.* 26.13-14, the text and interpretation of which is contentious. Other versions of this classification could be given, and this should be regarded as indicative only. The classic discussion of the Platonic reading-order is that of Festugière (1969), but see also Westerink (1990), lxvii-lxxiii.

8. <i>Phaedrus</i>	theology	theological
9. <i>Symposium</i>	theology	theological
10. <i>Philebus</i>	the Good	theological

After this *decad*, an integral programme in itself, come two 'perfect' dialogues:

11. <i>Timaeus</i>	all reality via physics	physical
12. <i>Parmenides</i>	all reality via metaphysics	theological

The *Republic* and the *Laws* remained outside the basic curriculum, but were (the *Republic* at least) extensively studied, as is demonstrated by Olympiodorus' frequent references and Proclus' commentary.

Most of the works in Iamblichus' programme are easily imagined as having Pythagorean connexions: the *Gorgias* and *Phaedo* offered myths and the analogy of soul as a harmony; the *Parmenides*, *Sophist* and *Politicus* employ Eleatics, regarded as Pythagoreans, as main speakers; the *Philebus* with its considerable use of One and Many, Limit and Unlimited, was consistently regarded as a Pythagorizing work; the *Timaeus* employed a Pythagorean as chief speaker. These works do not constitute a representative sample of Plato's philosophy, but the Alexandrians continued to adhere to this Pythagorizing curriculum, although no longer seeing the same significance in Pythagoras. Strangest of all, the *Parmenides* preserved its supreme position, even though its canonical use as a source for Platonist theology had virtually disappeared.<sup>58</sup> In its place came a reversion to the *Timaeus* and the central books of the *Republic* as the principal Platonic theological texts—texts which, as Olympiodorus shows, were much easier to make consistent with Christian theology. The curriculum was now traditional, and was perhaps preserved for practical rather than theoretical reasons. Olympiodorus' school backed away from a technical style of theology (such as the *Parmenides* could encourage) towards a more

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<sup>58</sup> Even at Athens Marinus abandoned the theological interpretation (see n. 5), and Ol. makes little or no mention of it. Ol. *In Cat.* refers to a passage of *Prm.* as *Phd.*, Elias *In Cat.* citing it as *Sph.*; see Westerink (1976), pp. 24-25; we further suggest that he may be referring to a passage of *Sph.* as *Thl.* at 8.6. Iamblichus' interpretation of *Prm.* is known from Proclus, *In Prm.* 6, pp.1054ff (with the scholiast's identification), and is remarkable for relating the so-called first hypothesis of the second part with a plurality of divine henads rather than with one supreme divine principle (the position of Plutarch of Athens, Syrianus, and Proclus).

general and less partisan outlook that could serve as philosophical foundations for pious pagans and Christians alike.

### 6. *Olympiodorus and his World*

Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle for the most part have significance for intellectual rather than for political and social history, but intellectual history overlaps in important ways with both. During the Roman Empire prominent intellectuals often had great influence with the Emperor—Arius with Augustus, Thrasyllus with Tiberius, Seneca with Nero—and Marcus Aurelius or Julian could have been considered part of the intellectual scene in their own right.

Under Justinian the interaction of Emperor and intellectuals was very different. Already there had been numerous instances of severe, sometimes fatal, clashes between intellectuals and the authorities.<sup>59</sup> Pagan intellectuals were constantly under suspicion, and needed strong justification for activities such as teaching. The extent of the suppression of open teaching by Platonists in 529 is easily exaggerated, but there is no doubt that for a time pagan intellectual activity was severely curbed. Yet the purge does not seem to have been deep-rooted, and certainly not permanent, at Alexandria.<sup>60</sup> Olympiodorus seems to have produced commentaries into the 560s, which were still recorded 'from the voice' (ἀπὸ φωνῆς), and presumed much the same classroom situation as the *Gorgias*-commentary, probably pre-529.<sup>61</sup> The *Alcibiades*-commentary, itself examining a dialogue in which Socrates tackles a younger man assuming a teacher-like role, suggests that Olympiodorus still (at around 560) regards teacher-student relations as an important concern: students are independent agents, who freely choose to attend class and study; a teacher is fulfilled by communicating what he has to say (suggesting that the sharing of one's psychic perfection increases rather than diminishes it); and the rules

<sup>59</sup> See Athanassiadi (1993).

<sup>60</sup> For bibliography see n. 23.

<sup>61</sup> W. dated the *In Alc.* to not much before 560 (following Cameron, 1969), that on the *Meteorologica* to after 565 (1973, 21, and cf. 1990 xvii-xxi). The division of the commentaries into a general discussion (*theoria*) and a reading (*lexis*) commenting on lemmata seems to presume a particular kind of classroom situation with a formal teacher-pupil division.

require that proper criticism within a philosophical school should take place in private rather than in public.<sup>62</sup> This recalls the various hints Olympiodorus offers his students about behaviour in the allegedly pre-529 *Gorgias*-commentary.<sup>63</sup>

An important aspect of teacher-student relations is fees. Damascius made it plain that he regarded Olympiodorus' teacher Ammonius as greedy (*V.Isid.* 316), although it is not clear whether it is students' fees or the city's stipend that he was seen as too ready to pocket. The Athenian school seems to have been well-endowed, allowing its members greater freedom from teaching to earn their keep.<sup>64</sup> Alexandria had a long tradition of supporting Neoplatonist activity within its walls, probably because it was seen as a way of preserving the Greek cultural heritage. What had become by the early sixth century of the municipal stipend that had once been paid is unclear.<sup>65</sup> Olympiodorus comments on the philosopher's need for an income, prompted by a passing reference to money in the text.<sup>66</sup> Socrates, remarkably in view of *Ap.* 19d and 31b-c, is said to have sought payment, but not an excessive one, for without a commensurate amount, a teacher—who is something of a pauper—cannot live. Olympiodorus suggests that the solution is for the statesman to redistribute from those with more than they deserve to those in need (presumably including philosophers). If this is other than hypothetical speculation, it sounds like a plea for public funding, suggesting that such a scheme had either ceased in Alexandria or been under threat. Olympiodorus also observes that a student who learns fairness could not (should not?) be ungenerous

<sup>62</sup> *In Alc.* 87-88; 111, 133-34.

<sup>63</sup> 7.2, 40.7, 42.3, 43.8.

<sup>64</sup> But Glucker (1978) has demolished the tradition that the Athenian school enjoyed a continuous endowment that dated back to Plato himself.

<sup>65</sup> On the payment of municipal salaries to sophists, orators, philosophers, grammarians etc. since the second century A.D. see Kennedy (1983), pp. 133-179. Alexandria had paid a salary to Hermeias, which continued to be paid to his widow Aedesia while her two sons were educated (Damascius, *V.Isid.* fr. 24: ἡ γὰρ καὶ τὴν δημοσίαν σίτησιν διδομένην τοῖς παισὶ διεφύλαξε νέοις ἔτι οὖσιν, ἕως ἐφιλοσόφησαν: 'who also looked after the public support-funds being paid to her sons until they philosophized'). Presumably it went to Ammonius when he started teaching there, and Damascius (*V.Isid.* 316) might be held to suggest that he was successful in ensuring the continuation of his income. It is highly doubtful, though, whether any salary could have been paid to a pagan teacher at Alexandria following the enactment of Justinian's 'reforms', which severely limited higher education (Procopius, *Secret History* 26.5-6; Kennedy, pp. 177-78).

<sup>66</sup> 40.7, on 514a2 ('than to receive much money').

to his teacher, but will seek to repay the benefit (43.2), and that the philosopher alone does not charge fees, because he claims to make people good and hopes that by so doing they will not show him ingratitude.<sup>67</sup> It looks as if Olympiodorus is dependent on voluntary fees, and needs to prick his students' consciences. Olympiodorus' concern to justify a philosopher's interest in income resembles ways that the church and its ministers have found it necessary, over the ages, to express a need for money.

The situation confronting Olympiodorus required that he be politically aware but uninvolved. There is a sad ring to the passage in the *Gorgias*-commentary (41.2) where he advocates withdrawal from the political system if it is incapable of being moved towards aristocracy (the rule of the best). All the same he recognized that the philosopher could not avoid 'some peripheral involvement with the toils of his fellow-citizens' (41.4). He may perhaps have been trying to influence the survival of his school's activities through the moral lessons which he taught to his students, and at very least he is aware that like Socrates he may be judged on the basis of the public deeds of his students (42.3, 40.5).

### 7. *Rhetoric*

Rhetoric is an important topic in the present commentary, because of the contemporary need for philosophy to adjust carefully its relationship with a discipline that could embrace both opponents and allies. In some cases philosophers found themselves practising rhetoric for an income.<sup>68</sup> The *Gorgias* includes a critique of the claims of rhetoric to be a rational process, and of those of orators to be statesmen (462bff.). It includes a bitter attack on the great political orators of democratic Athens: Miltiades, Themistocles, Cimon and Pericles (515dff.).

Olympiodorus believes that the proper relationship between the political orator and the philosopher is portrayed by the relations of

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<sup>67</sup> In *Alc.* 140-41: Ol. goes on to suggest that Plato's wealth may be the reason for his non-fee-taking policy; and shortly before he had given various improbable reasons why Zeno did charge: (i) to get his students into the habit of despising cash; (ii) so that he might have sufficient at the expense of the wealthy; (iii) so that he could ensure equality of wealth by redistributing the excess of the wealthy to the poorer ones (students?).

<sup>68</sup> See Westerink (1964), 76-77.

Plato (and Socrates!) with the fourth-century figures, Isocrates, Demosthenes and Lysurgus (the last two Plato's students!, 41.10). Olympiodorus clearly expected some of his students who read the *Gorgias* to become orators themselves. To this end he attempts to salvage a reasonable image for rhetoric from Plato's hostile text by carefully distinguishing between grades of orator, and in particular by arguing that Plato recognized an intermediate kind (such as Demosthenes, Pericles, and Themistocles) between the abject flatterer and the true aristocrat (1.13). Olympiodorus' more positive reading of rhetoric than the strict text of the *Gorgias* would encourage relies on Socrates' reference to the perfect orator (*Grg.* 521d),<sup>69</sup> and on the mellower perspective on rhetoric found in the *Phaedrus*. It is a good example of the way a Platonist like Olympiodorus takes a unitarian approach to a text, feeling free to employ in the explication of one dialogue themes from another.

The formal tripartition of rhetoric that Olympiodorus employs goes back at least to Syrianus.<sup>70</sup> This approach involves Olympiodorus in some fascinating interpretation of the *Gorgias*: for when Socrates complains that the famous democratic statesmen had used neither genuine rhetoric nor the flattering kind (517a), he is surely implying that they failed in both, that they were unable even to flatter adequately. This will not do for Olympiodorus, who seeks a more positive image for them, and he claims that Plato is *absolving* them from charges of flattery even though they acceded to the people's basic desires, and that they are superior to the flatterer (33.3, 41.18).

Olympiodorus' rehabilitation of Pericles is also reflected in his telling of the old story that Alcibiades induced Pericles to start the Peloponnesian War through the Megarian Decree, so that he would not have to account for the money spent on Phidias' statue of Athena, as he was in charge of it himself.<sup>71</sup> The misuse of public

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<sup>69</sup> Perhaps also on the milder tones of 517b.

<sup>70</sup> The three types are found in Hermias *On the Phaedrus*: a comment on 260d introduces a tripartition involving true, intermediate, and popular rhetoric, p. 221.9-24 (Couvreur). The philosopher can become involved in the state and thus descend to the level of statesman, whence he may take up oratory in order to give the best advice and become an orator of the best kind.

<sup>71</sup> *In Alc.* 26. The story derives from Aristophanes' *Peace*: as it builds up to a joke in which the giant statue of Peace is compared with a work of Phidias, the *Peace* (605-618) had given rise to the belief that the prosecution of the sculptor (which actually took place in 438/7) had been a cause of the Peloponnesian War. One should note that Aristophanes may well be mocking the



funds had allegedly reflected badly on Pericles too, since he was the overseer of the project, causing him to seek to divert attention by prompting the Megarian Decree and thus bringing about the war. Aristophanes has been taken seriously by Diodorus (12.39.1-3), who probably follows Ephorus, and also by Plutarch (*Per.* 31-32), though he refrains from making any connexion with the Megarian Decree explicit. As seen also in the scholia, the full story involved Pericles in trying not to render his accounts for the project. What Olympiodorus or his source has done is graft the tale on to *another* story in Plutarch, in the life of Alcibiades, of how Alcibiades, being told by Pericles that he was agonizing over how to present his accounts to the people, advised him that he should rather be worrying how *not* to present those accounts. The effect of this composite story is to shift the blame for the war away from Pericles, of whom Olympiodorus is trying to paint an attractive picture, onto the admittedly unreliable Alcibiades.<sup>72</sup>

So the superiority of the four democratic orators over mere flatterers, according to Olympiodorus, is that they saved their city, they saved the bodies of their citizens (1.13, 32.3), whereas flattering orators simply pander to their citizens' lowest whims. The inferiority of the four democratic orators to true statesmen is one of ends: they did not themselves possess the correct ends (which the statesman has), but merely carried out the wishes of the citizens (2.4 etc.). They were like apothecaries who gave a patient drugs to achieve the effect which the patient desired, not which the doctor knew to be best. A true orator does not necessarily know the reason for recommending a particular policy, but is subservient to the true statesman, who does know. Socrates famously depicts himself as nearly the only true statesman in fifth-century Athens (*Gorgias*

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multitude of unlikely explanations of the War currently being offered, since he has given a conflicting and equally far-fetched one in the *Acharnians*, again involving Pericles. See G. Donnay, *L'Antiquité Classique* 37 (1968), 19-36; De Ste. Croix (1972), pp. 236-37.

<sup>72</sup> Pericles gets a much better press as an orator from Ol. (1.13) than he does from Plato. Ol.'s admiration for him is evident also at *In Alc.* 29, where he considers Alcibiades' admiration for him justified, quoting with approval Thucydides' description of Pericles' rule as the rule of a 'first man' (2.65.9). This passage might have suggested to Ol. that Periclean rule was an aristocracy, though his reading of the *Gorgias* does not allow him to agree with such an evaluation (cf. *In Alc.* 32). Also in the *Alcibiades*-commentary (136) we find the word 'woman-taught' (γυναικοδιδάκτος) applied to Pericles: Ol. may well have preserved a comic coinage applied to Pericles by a contemporary. The term seems not to have been used elsewhere.

521d), which gives Olympiodorus a recipe for a state where orators listen to philosophers. Olympiodorus promoted the ideal of a training for public figures, who, if not philosophers themselves, would at least understand the need to consult philosophic opinion. True orators possess different speeches for various types of audience; they recommend the good (without necessarily understanding it), and serve the aristocrats, those naturally fitted to govern (1.13, 41.2).

Olympiodorus also distinguishes three types of rhetoric along rather different lines: *demagogic* rhetoric manipulates ordinary people, *instructive* rhetoric is used by the sophists, and *practical* rhetoric employed in the law-courts (33.2).<sup>73</sup> Here Olympiodorus is surely thinking of the sophists or orators of his own day. He is familiar with Demosthenes and the rules of composition, and with the kind of rhetoric taught in the schools and the literature associated with such teaching.<sup>74</sup> He is also familiar with the kind of picture of the *Gorgias* that was being promulgated in the rhetorical schools (0.3). This suggests he either taught rhetoric himself, or at least encouraged its proper teaching, an implication encouraged by the positive image of rhetoric which he tries to create in his *Gorgias* commentary. At any rate, the discussion of rhetoric is one of the commentary's most prominent and possibly original features.

### 8. *Pre-Neoplatonic Interpretation of the Gorgias*

The earliest known arrangement of Plato's dialogues, that of Aristophanes of Byzantium, did not include the *Gorgias* in its five trilogies, perhaps causing it to be less widely read than it deserved. Cicero makes it clear, however, that under the guidance of Charmadas the *Gorgias* was read in the Academy around the turn of the first century BC, in close conjunction with the *Phaedrus*.<sup>75</sup> Cicero is familiar with the work, as one would expect of a writer whose interests included both philosophy and rhetoric.

<sup>73</sup> The separate nature of the demagogic type is guaranteed by 45.1, where this alone is contrasted with the instructive type.

<sup>74</sup> *In Phd.* 2.7, *In Alc.* 104.3-6. Compare Westerink (1976), p. 26.

<sup>75</sup> *Cic. De Or.* 1.47, 87-92. In Cicero's philosophical works *Grg.* is used most obviously in the *Tusculan Disputations*: 470de (5.12.34), 484c (2.1.1).

The tetralogical arrangement attributed by Diogenes Laertius to Thrasyllus couples the work with the *Euthydemus*, *Protagoras*, and *Meno*, indicating that it was seen as part of a series of works designed to tackle rival educators. The tetralogies stand in an unknown relation to a classification of dialogue character: together with the *Euthydemus* and the *Hippias*-dialogues, the *Gorgias* was regarded as ‘anatreptic’, concerned to overturn the position of Socrates’ opponents. It belonged to the genus of ‘zetetic’ dialogues, probably because it was thought to be aimed more at the refutation of falsehoods than at the establishment of the truth, and to the species known as ‘agonistic’, seemingly because Socrates seems to be in competition with the interlocutors.<sup>76</sup> Other pre-Neoplatonic arrangements of the dialogues seem to have afforded the work a similar role. Al-Nadîm appears to preserve the arrangement of Theon of Smyrna, which puts the work in similar company;<sup>77</sup> while al-Farabi is following a Middle Platonist arrangement when he places the *Gorgias* among those dialogues which are supposed to illustrate the crafts that *fail* to provide the desired human happiness.<sup>78</sup>

Plato was an author much read in the second century AD, by non-Platonists and non-philosophers as well as Platonists. Despite its length and the power of its argument, the *Gorgias* was not especially influential with Plutarch of Chaeronia or Alcinous, although it was well enough known to them,<sup>79</sup> but it was studied

<sup>76</sup> Albinus *Prologus* 3.

<sup>77</sup> Tarrant (1993), pp. 58-72. *Grg.* seemingly falls in an ‘apotreptic’ group consisting of *Euthd.*, *Grg.*, *Hp.Ma.*, *Hp.Mi.*, *Ion*, *Prt.* This group follows a seemingly protreptic group comprising most of the other zetetic dialogues.

<sup>78</sup> Tarrant (1993), pp. 31-38, suspecting that it may be Galen’s arrangement. The group consists of *Euthph.*, *Crat.*, *Ion*, *Gorg.*, *Sph.*, *Euthd.*, and *Prm.*, dialogues said to be concerned with the inadequacies of religious science, linguistics, poetry, rhetoric, sophistry (x2), and dialectic respectively. The failings of *Parmenides* are of a lesser order.

<sup>79</sup> Jones (1916) lists 9 parallels + 4 possible parallels on pp. 144-46 and 20 parallels + 4 possible parallels on p. 116. This seems to place the work behind *Tim.*, *Rep.*, *Leg.*, *Phdr.*, *Symp.*, *Phlb.*, and *Phd.*, as well as behind the *Epistles*, in its rate of use by Plutarch. Similar impressions are received from Helmbold and O’Neill (1959) who find some 33 references to *Grg.* Whittaker’s edition of Alcinous cites 13 passages of *Grg.* in its index. In Middle Platonic times there does not seem to have been disproportionate use of any one passage of *Grg.*, as there is, for instance, of highlights from *Tht.* Of authors influenced by Middle Platonism, Maximus Tyrius makes use of 450a, 464cd, 465bc, 484c-e, 485e, 486b-c, 493a, 500dff., 518b; Philo of 464dff., 469cd, 484b, 493a, 500b, 501a, 508b, 509c; Apuleius of 454dff., 458e, 463bff., 465a, 466d-68d, 469a-75e, 476a-79e, 499e, 501a, 510b; Clement of Alexandria of 448c, 456a, 465c, 486d, 492e, 497a-c,

seriously in the Platonist school of Calvenus Taurus in the middle of the second century.<sup>80</sup> Olympiodorus knows of a primarily moral reading of the *Gorgias*, according to which 'the just would be happy and the unjust unlucky and wretched, and the more unjust somebody is, the more wretched he would be. The more chronic his injustice, the more wretched still. And if it is immortal he is far more wretched' (0.4). The *Prolegomena* also refers to a moral interpretation, which makes the work's primary aim to determine whether it is better to commit injustice or to suffer it. This is indeed a natural way to understand it, and, while it is not easy to attribute such views to any interpreter in particular, one might well believe that it was Middle Platonic rather than Neoplatonic.

By the second century AD the *Gorgias* was also regularly studied by orators, and it must be said that one of them, Aelius Aristides, in a work whose impact is highly visible on Olympiodorus, was capable of making Plato look somewhat ungracious in his handling of the orators.<sup>81</sup> The *Gorgias* was thus viewed primarily as a treatment of rhetoric, by Platonists and orators alike, and was cited in a number of routine products of the rhetorical schools, most often in relation to the picture of rhetoric painted by Socrates or Polus.<sup>82</sup> It was used extensively by the scholars Themistius and Libanius in the fourth century, with most interest in the tussle with Callicles and least in the discussion with Gorgias.<sup>83</sup>

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508a, 521a, 524ab, 525bc; Alexander of Aphrodisias of 448a, 466b-e, 470dff., 480b, 483ab, 488eff., 491e, 494a, 497c, 505c. See too the collection of information on ancient *Grg*-exegesis in Dörrie-Baltes (1993), p. 195.

<sup>80</sup> Aulus Gellius, *NA* 7.14, on which now see Lakmann (1995), 82-94: Gellius speaks of a multi-volume commentary on the work in which Taurus discussed the reasons for punishment in Book I. Gellius seems to know 473a, 484c-485e, 489a, and 508b (mostly at 10.22, where subtle use is made of Callicles' attack on mature-age philosophizing; see Tarrant, 1996).

<sup>81</sup> Notably in the speech *For the Four*, Olympiodorus' first-hand knowledge of this work is questioned by Behr (1968), who assumes that he follows Ammonius, who follows Porphyry's attack on Aristides in the lost *Against Aristides*. But it is clear that Aristides' criticisms have remained an important issue, and the vagueness of references to Aristides reflects Olympiodorus' usual practice (shared by most of us) of not looking up references in the lecture theatre when he believed that he remembered the overall thrust of what had been said.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. *Rhetores Graeci* 2.89, 2.112, 5.4, 5.605, 7.6 (Walz).

<sup>83</sup> Themistius: 453a, 464c ff, 465b, 473d, 474d, 479a, 481c, 486a, 486d, 487a, 491d, 506eff, 507e, 512a, 514ab, 518ab, 526a. Libanius: 459c, 463e, 477b, 486b-d, 491d, 492e, 506c, 509a, 511a, 512b, 515b, 516a, 516e, 523a, 523eff, 526a.

### 9. *The Demiurgic Interpretation*

With the Iamblichan curriculum, which focused on a concentrated group of dialogues, the overall interpretation of the *Gorgias* changed, and its importance increased. The corpus no longer contained a group of polemical works, and the *Gorgias* must have been included for its positive teaching, either open or symbolic. It is probable that, like other early works in the curriculum, it was thought to concern the physical world, thus reflecting Iamblichus' preoccupation with salvation through learning about ourselves, about the world around us, and about the theological world. Perhaps Iamblichus' idea was that *all* dialogues that are to be understood at the physical level—all, that is, except the *Alcibiades*, which is about what human beings really are—ultimately aim at promoting awareness of a higher power within the physical world.<sup>84</sup> This new perspective saw the *Gorgias* less in terms of moral and political concerns and more in the light of concerns with the physical universe.

It seems that Iamblichus believed that each dialogue must have an aim (*skopos*). Though he later reverts to translating this 'central theme' (1976, p. 28), Westerink suggests the literal translation of *skopos* as 'target' (p.15), and sees here a subtle shift from the pre-Iamblichan term *hypothesis* (D.L. 3.57); *anon. Thl.* had probably used *prothesis* as the appropriate technical term (see col. 2). Though both alternatives are occasionally found in later Neoplatonism too, *skopos* is the standard post-Iamblichan term.

While we have no fragments of an Iamblichan commentary on the *Gorgias*,<sup>85</sup> Olympiodorus refers to those who thought the *skopos* of the *Gorgias* was the demiurge (0.4), while the anonymous *Prolegomena* (22) seems to be referring to the same persons, when

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<sup>84</sup> Iamblichus, *In Alc.* fr. 2.8-9: σκοπός μὲν ἐστὶν αὐτῷ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκφῆναι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστος ἡμῶν.... Iamblichus presumably saw the first seven dialogues of the curriculum as having physical rather than theological subject-matter, and all dialogues between the *Gorgias* and the *Sophist-Politicus* as as ultimately about demiurges. So, for example, *Crat.* was about a divinity who has instituted correct language, a linguistic demiurge, and the *Theaetetus*, especially in its passage advocating assimilation to god (176b ff.), invokes a god easily identified with the demiurgic power of *Timaeus* 90a-d.

<sup>85</sup> See Dillon (1973).

speaking of those who thought the *skopos* was 'the intellect which sees itself'.<sup>86</sup> In each case we should consider the possibility that the reference, while inexplicit, is to Iamblichus.<sup>87</sup> Iamblichus identified the sophist (presumably the target) of Plato's *Sophist* with the demiurge of the sublunary world; he defended this view elaborately with reference to the various definitions and descriptions of the sophist;<sup>88</sup> identifying Plato's sophist with a demiurgic figure is clearly an esoteric move; this 'sophist' becomes not so much a *theme* of the *Sophist* as an *ultimate object*, a target aimed at (*skopos*).<sup>89</sup> Hence Iamblichus' term for a dialogue's subject, *skopos*, fits an esoteric hidden goal, in contrast with other terms. His interests and imagination would have enabled him to see the *Gorgias* too as a work which ultimately unveils a demiurgic power.

At first sight interpretations which made either *Sophist* or *Gorgias* deal ultimately with a demiurge seem equally strange. But the scholiast on the opening line of the *Sophist* not only identifies the 'sophist' with Iamblichus' demiurge of the sublunary world, but also speaks of his demiurgic triad and of his 'Father of Demiurges'.

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<sup>86</sup> The Aristotelian ring suggests that the latter description may be a less accurate description, influenced by the Platonic-Aristotelian syncretism of the Alexandrian school, but this is not certain.

<sup>87</sup> See Jackson (1995), 291-5. W., however, refers to passages in Proclus which concern Amelius: *In Tim.* 1.306.1-14 and *Theol.* 5.3.28.2-18SW. It seems that Amelius, in discussing the scope of Plato's demiurge from the *Timaeus*, postulated a triple demiurge, three intellects or three kings, he who is, he who holds, and he who sees. The second *holds* the first, and the third *holds* the second but merely *sees* the first (8-9). Whether this could have some bearing on the *self-seeing* intellect in anon. *Prol.* 26 is unclear (for it is just possible that a term such as αὐθορῶν or αὐτοπτικός has been wrongly interpreted later), and we must also be sceptical about whether *Grg.* could be seen to be particularly concerned with a *third* intellect. If it concerns an intellect at all, then that intellect is most easily identified with Zeus in the myth, who certainly had Kronos before him who could be interpreted as an intellect by Neoplatonists, but some intellect above Kronos must then be supplied. Moreover Proclus tells us that *Tim.* 39e (where intellect *sees* the ideas in τῷ ὃ ἔστι ζῶον) related to Amelius' theory (*In Tim.* 3.108.18-20).

<sup>88</sup> Westerink (1962), xxxviii; cf. Proclus, *Theol.* 1.5.25.16-18SW. The scholiast on the opening of *Sph.* identifies the Sophist with Iamblichus' demiurge of the sublunary world, and the dialogue can be seen as teaching us *through the things of the sublunary world* which themselves have the status of images. Hence it can be seen as being about non-being (as at *Prol.* 21) at the same time as being about things. *Plt.* must surely have been concerned with a higher demiurge in Iamblichus' eyes, particularly in the light of the Helmsman figure's connexions with Kronos (271c-272b).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. anon. *Prol.* 21, 22: the *Sophist's skopos* is indeed the sophist rather than division or non-being.

Presumably Iamblichus thought that the *Sophist's* companion dialogue, the *Politicus*, also unveiled some demiurgic entity: for if the target of the *Sophist* is ultimately a divine sophist, then the target of the *Politicus* will ultimately be a divine statesman.<sup>90</sup> The *Politicus* certainly involves a power with a quasi-demiurgic role, for its myth employs a helmsman and controller of the heavenly motions, Kronos in a previous era and now perhaps Zeus in our own (271c-272b). Kronos was the 'statesman' of a bygone era (274e-275a). The *Gorgias* is concerned with the statesman, like the *Politicus*. At face value it concerns the correct management of one's own and the state's constitution, perhaps also the world's constitution (507e-508a). But within a theory that sees the ultimate statesman as some kind of demiurgic power, then it is conceivable that this figure should be found in the *Gorgias*, and as the ultimate object of that dialogue's teaching.

A reading of the *Gorgias* as demiurge-focussed would, like our supposed reading of the *Politicus*, rest largely on the interpretation of the dialogue's myth, and Iamblichus' celebrated preference for intuitive philosophical insights must have relied heavily on what the myths were supposed to reveal. Indeed all of the dialogues in which the main character introduces a lengthy myth are included in the Iamblichan corpus: *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Politicus*,<sup>91</sup> *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Timaeus*, *Republic*. In the present commentary Olympiodorus mentions Iamblichus by name only when interpreting the principal myth (46.9), and explicitly links the myth with the demiurgic interpretation (0.4). In the *Gorgias*-myth too Kronos could be seen as the statesman of a bygone era, Zeus of the present one. The connexion of the *Gorgias*-myth with a triad of demiurges and a pre-demiurgic force above them appears in Proclus, who comments upon the myth's division of the world between Zeus,

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<sup>90</sup> See also Dillon (1992), p. 366, who follows Westerink (1962), xxxviii. We think it unnecessary to commit ourselves here to their view that the statesman was identical with the *heavenly* demiurge.

<sup>91</sup> The *Politicus* too had been selected primarily thanks to its very influential myth, which is far more often alluded to by later Platonists than other parts of the work. On the *Nachleben* of this work see Dillon (1992), Schicker (1992). Dillon (366) ventures to remark that from the fact that Iamblichus included the work in the canon 'one may conclude from that alone that he had views about the interpretation of the myth.' He also believes that the cosmic cycle in the myth received a synchronic interpretation from Iamblichus, and that he may have 'first developed the exegesis of the myth that we find later in the Athenian School.'

Posidon, and Hades (523a).<sup>92</sup> Proclus does not necessarily follow Iamblichus in all details, but he seems clearly to be working within an essentially Iamblichan theory of a plurality of demiurges in his exegesis of the *Gorgias* myth. Olympiodorus himself mentions only *one* demiurge, a reflection perhaps of Alexandrian metaphysical economy or a reluctance to engage in the overt forms of Neoplatonic polytheism. It may, however, signify that it is the whole demiurgic system that was meant to be unfolded in the myth, not some part of it.

In his own comments on the *Gorgias*-myth, Olympiodorus detects a Kronos-figure and a triad of new-generation divinities, whom the Neoplatonists associate with the heavens, the sub-lunary world of fire, air, and water, and the earthy world below: the triad Zeus-Poseidon-Hades (47.4). The divinity who would most naturally be seen as the chief figure of the myth is Zeus, the power of the heavens and the power of judgment (47.4, 48.2). Olympiodorus assigns him no explicit demiurgic role, but the god's role as an organizer and an administrator of justice is clear.<sup>93</sup> We assume that even the Iamblichan interpretation of the *Gorgias* claimed that it sought to unveil not the demiurgic role of a judicial God, but the judicial role of a divinity whom both he and Olympiodorus recognize as 'the demiurge'.

Olympiodorus' interpretation of the myth concentrates on the figures of both Kronos (a higher and well-thought-of power, identified with pure intellect) and Zeus (47.2-6, etc.). The identification of demiurge and Zeus is standard in late Neoplatonism.<sup>94</sup> Zeus is treated by Olympiodorus as the central figure: he is the power of

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<sup>92</sup> E.g. *Theol.* 1.4.18.25-27SW: καὶ μὲν καὶ ἐν τῷ Γοργία μὲν περὶ τῶν τριῶν δημιουργῶν καὶ περὶ τῆς δημιουργικῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς διακληρώσεως μῦθον ἀπαγγέλλων ..., cf. 1.5.26.17-18SW: ἐν Γοργία δὲ τὸν Ὅμηρον τῆς τῶν δημιουργικῶν μονάδων τριαδικῆς ὑποστάσεως.... Zeus is in a sense a member of this demiurgic triad which *Grg.* is supposed to hint at, but in another sense he is prior to it (e.g. *In Tim.* 1.315.8-11: ἐν τῷ Γοργία συντάττων τε αὐτὸν τοῖς Κρονίδαις καὶ ἐξαιρῶν ἀπ' αὐτῶν, ἵνα καὶ πρὸ τῶν τριῶν ἧ καὶ μετέχῃται ὑπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ τὸν νόμον αὐτῷ συγκαθιδρεύων), though Proclus' approach to the demiurge is in fact rather more unitary than that of many of his predecessors.

<sup>93</sup> This is of major importance in linking Zeus to the subject matter of the entire work, for rhetoric (the theme with which *Grg.* begins) is an image of constitutional craft (πολιτική, 463d) and in particular of justice (465c).

<sup>94</sup> See for example Iamblichus in *Herm. In Phdr.* p.136.17-19 (cf. 45.13, 94.6, 256.5) and in *Proc. In Tim.* 1.308.17-18; Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 1.5. It is a Zeus-demiurge whom Proclus sees as the key figure of the *Gorgias*-myth (*In Tim.* 1.315.8-11).



judgment (48.2), he holds the sceptre to indicate his control of judgments (47.4), and he installs the judges (*Grg.* 523e) whom Olympiodorus sees as the main focus of the myth (46.9). Olympiodorus thus supplies the evidence of a Neoplatonist tendency to see the *Gorgias* myth as being about something *other than* the souls of the dead. Yet he himself defines a myth of this kind (a *nekuia*) as about souls (46.8), rejecting Iamblichus' view that makes the judging powers the main topic. It is of interest to note, therefore, that Iamblichus did *not* regard the *Gorgias* myth as a *nekuia* (46.9), possibly because it was his view that it was not about the judged but about the powers that organize judgment. These powers are associated closely with Zeus, and it is the system of judgment instituted by Zeus which might very well be held to explain finally why the values of the orator, the power-seeker, and the hedonist are inadequate, thereby crowning the work as a whole.<sup>95</sup>

The demiurgic power, identified with Zeus, can plausibly be seen as an 'intellect which sees itself', assuming that this formula was adopted by the author of the *Prolegomena*, in his efforts to reconcile this Zeus with an Aristotelian self-contemplating God.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> In the *Politicus*, the demiurge is presumably Zeus too: the Helmsman of the myth is identified by Plato with Kronos, but this helmsman belonged to a previous age (*Plt.* 271c-272b) and the statesman under investigation is one who will manage the state in a post-Kronos era—the era of Zeus (272b). Compare Proclus (*In Tim.* 1.315.23-31) who says that Zeus is the demiurge of the present world-order in the *Politicus*. As Proclus saw (*ibid.* 15-17) in the *Philebus* too (30d) the name of Zeus is linked with a demiurgic causal power. The human πολιτικός is linked with Kronos rather than Zeus by Hermeias (*In Phdr.* 146.13-15). Here he stands for intermediate souls, because he applies himself at one moment to contemplation, but turns back at another moment to the organization of lower things. The influence of the Plato's picture of the Helmsman in the *Politicus* is clear, and one might believe that such a person performed a role analogous to that of Kronos there. But the cyclical role of Kronos is not utilized by the later Neoplatonists, who, like Olympiodorus, prefer to interpret the temporal events of myth in a non-temporal fashion. And, like Olympiodorus, they take their cue from Plato's *Cratylus* (396b) in regarding Kronos as a *purely* contemplative God, a pure intellect. (As early as Numenius (fr. 16dP) it seems that a Helmsman-inspired God, his second intellect, becomes *entirely contemplative* after the basic creation process is complete). The myth implies that Zeus has an equally cyclical existence of control and non-control, and the demiurge figure reflects much better the intermediate role of part contemplative, part practical life of 'politics'. If one takes Proclus *In Tim.* 1,147.29-148.2 one finds that the soul living on an intellectual plane alone is said to live Kronos-fashion, while if it descends to a notion of 'political life' (πολιτική ζωή) it lives Zeus-fashion. That Zeus is the paradigm for the life of the πολιτικός could not be clearer.

<sup>96</sup> For Philoponus' application of the notion of self-vision to Aristotle's

Or again he might be identifying that intellect with Kronos, who at 47.3 represents that kind of intellect which both seeks and is sought, has in other respects too the required reflexivity and functions as a self-seeing intellect at *On the Phaedo* 1.5. But again we might prefer to see the phrase as an integral part of the *original* interpretation, in which case we may note two relevant items in the myth itself: the judges of the myth are able to see those judged directly because they are naked, and Zeus had realized the problem of unjust judgments before he was told by Pluto and the guardians of the Blessed Isles—that is to say that he has foreknowledge. Yet these features are about *sight* not about *self-sight*. They would suggest an ‘intellect which sees’ but not an ‘intellect which sees itself’.<sup>97</sup>

The demiurgic interpretation of the Gorgias, making everything tie in with the message of the myth, was clearly imaginative, but unlikely to survive the test of time. Olympiodorus’ commentary is evidence at once of the persistence of the Iamblichan approach and of the waning of its influence. After Iamblichus the *Gorgias* had continued to receive attention. The ancient *scholia* on the *Gorgias*, which are surprisingly full and closely related to the work of Olympiodorus, refer on two occasions to the views of Plutarch of Athens.<sup>98</sup> Proclus, unsurprisingly, seems to have had his say.<sup>99</sup> In a sense it would be more worth noting if any prominent late Platonic commentator had been known *not* to have lectured on the *Gorgias*.

### 10. Olympiodorus’ Reading

Olympiodorus’ own interpretation is, in general character at least, what one might regard as the remaining alternative for one who

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god (*Met.* 1074b33-34), in a passage which draws no distinction between the vision of self and the vision of reality, see *In De An.* 37.26-28.

<sup>97</sup> Hence it is possible that a term such as αὐθορῶν or αὐτοπτικός has been wrongly interpreted by a later generation as referring to *reflexive* vision rather than vision *in person* (the physician’s ‘autopsy’). Even so it is still not easy to explain the myth’s Zeus-figure as specially deserving of identification with the Amelian ‘intellect which sees’ (see above, n. 87).

<sup>98</sup> pp. 52.23, 102.17 Carbonara Naddei. Of these passages the latter, on 495d, is interesting in that it anticipates Ol. in finding irony in the words of Socrates’ opponents.

<sup>99</sup> *In Remp.* 2.139.19-20 Kroll.

wished to avoid esotericism. The two straightforward interpretations had fastened upon the themes that surfaced in the arguments with Gorgias and Polus: rhetoric, and justice/injustice. Olympiodorus' interpretation focuses on the issues that surface in the arguments with Callicles, and on the competition between Socrates and Callicles over the happier life. Questions of justice and injustice remain central, and the contribution of rhetoric to the happy life is gradually reintroduced. But these questions are now seen against a richer theoretical background, in the light of the discussion about what, in the final analysis, human life should be aiming at. Thus Olympiodorus not only sees the *Gorgias* as being about happiness, he sees it as being directed towards establishing *the principles of happiness*.

In accordance with Neoplatonic doctrine, the ultimate aim of the *Gorgias* belongs to a higher theoretical plane than much of the content. It may seem strange that a work's aim is identified with the fundamentals of a theory rather than the conclusions that follow from it. But the Neoplatonists believed that Plato was already working with a complete and perfect system of philosophy, and his problem was not how to solve problems himself but how to bring his students round to sharing his beliefs. The target of the work thus becomes the deeper theory which one wants to make one's students aware of, not the more specific conclusions about everyday life and everyday reality. Thus it is the *principles* of happiness to which Olympiodorus thinks the work means to introduce us, and the discussions of rhetoric and of justice are designed to lead us to awareness of them.

There is a further refinement in that Olympiodorus does not believe that 'happiness' is a simple matter. The human being can be seen as soul and body, as soul only, as irrational and rational soul, or as rational soul only. An important place is given to the *Alcibiades* and its view that the person is soul rather than body, and philosophic progress is linked with the soul's shedding its connexions with the body. The 'happiness' and 'virtue' attributed to Socrates in the *Phaedo* could thus be seen as very different from those discussed in the *Gorgias*, for while the former was a happiness that came to those who allowed their souls to function unimpeded by the body (but not severed from it),<sup>100</sup> the latter is concerned with

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<sup>100</sup> There remains a higher happiness and a higher (theoretic) virtue for those who actually sever the connexion with the soul's 'chariot' (δχημα).

those still employing the body as the 'tool' of the soul.<sup>101</sup> In these circumstances one needs separate sub-rational functions of the soul as well, so that discussions of the soul do not see it as a quasi-unity and do not see its virtue as reducible to intelligence (*phronesis*), i.e. as totally determined by the needs of the rational faculty (see *Phaedo* 69a-d), let alone as applicable to that faculty in isolation, but see it rather as a complex entity with desires and emotions (cf. *Grg.* 493a ff.), and ground virtue in justice and temperance (*Grg.* 504d-508c), which are the virtues which *Republic* 4 explains in terms of the proper *relation* between the various faculties of soul.

Here Olympiodorus is much influenced by the parallel between the individual's constitution and the state's constitution which is central to the *Republic*. Indeed he seems to believe that the aim of the *Gorgias* is as much to discern the origins of the individual's *constitutional happiness* as the state's, and he frequently develops the psychic as well as the political aspects of *politeia*.<sup>102</sup> By *politeia*, he means, literally, the relevant proper constitution, whether of a state or of an individual's soul. Similarly, in discussing the aim of the *Republic* Proclus had emphasized that there is no incompatibility between the view that it is about justice and the view that it is about an ideal constitution. 'Each of us lives constitutionally when organized by justice, and the state lives justly when arranged according to the best constitution.'<sup>103</sup> So the individual may have constitutional virtue too.

Whereas the virtue discussed in the *Phaedo* is 'purificatory' virtue, in as much as it is the virtue of a soul being cleansed of bodily influences, the virtues of the *Gorgias* are 'constitutional' because they are the virtues exhibited in the soul or state which is properly constituted.<sup>104</sup> It has not always been recognized that this

<sup>101</sup> *In Alc.* 4.15-5.13.

<sup>102</sup> *Politeia*, political and psychic: 0.5, 4.1, 11.1, 15.1, 5, 18.1, 24.1, 25.1, 32.2, 34.2, 35.1, 45.1.

<sup>103</sup> *In Rep.* 1.11.26-28 Kroll.

<sup>104</sup> The distinction goes back to Plotinus (and his reading of *Phd.* 68c-69c, 82a-b, *Meno* 88b, *Euthd.* 281c, *Rep.* 430c), but is not traced in authors such as Philo, Alcinous, and Origen where one might have anticipated finding it, see Dillon (1983). Thereafter, perhaps in part due to a misunderstanding of Plotinus, the number of grades of virtue grows considerably, in ways no longer supported by Platonic texts. One should remember that Neoplatonists did not have recourse to the distinctions between 'early' and 'middle' Plato, or between 'Socratic' and 'mature' Plato, with which to explain the conflict between passages that claim that the virtues are a single thing, different things always found in the same individual, different and independent

*politikê aretê* need not have anything in particular to do with *politics* or community life, and it is misleading to translate the term 'social virtue' or 'civic virtue'.<sup>105</sup> These virtues are called *politikai* because they depend on how the individual or state is *constituted*. We therefore consider it least misleading to translate 'constitutional' virtue, and have regularly translated *politeia* as 'constitution' and *politikê* as 'constitutional'.

This kind of distinction between virtues, lives, and happinesses is not just the result of Neoplatonic love of proliferating the subjects which can be discussed. It is based on a sensitive appreciation of very real differences between the way in which the soul and its virtues are represented at different levels in different works. It may be claimed that Neoplatonists introduce such distinctions too readily on account of their ignorance of Platonic chronology. They could retort that some are too ready to resort to chronological explanations without fully appreciating how differences of perspective from one work to another will inevitably create differences in exposition, without entailing changes of doctrine. For Olympiodorus, then, the *Gorgias* aims to make us aware above all of the principles of constitutional virtue. His view should not be taken lightly.

### 11. *What was Olympiodorus' core Doctrine?*

We do not intend to preempt the reader's response to Olympiodorus' words by trying to give too full an overview of his doctrine here. Much of what emerges in the commentary is of primarily ethical significance, and it emerges fairly directly. Much of what Dillon (1996) can say of Plotinus' ethics would hold for Olympiodorus too. Though he is interpreting a work which is devoted to practical ethics, and is conscious of the need to give practical advice to the pupil, he cannot conceal the yearning to be free from the constraints of the real world. The constitutional virtues with which he repeatedly deals are still but a path forward to the higher purificatory virtues, and maybe beyond them. The aim for

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things. It is the *Phaedo* above all which seems to demand something more than the routine distinction between virtues proper and natural good qualities.

<sup>105</sup> Westerink (1962) xxxix, 48; (1976), p. 42 etc.

Olympiodorus is the eradication of the passions, not just their moderation, and hence a life which is essentially free from bodily desire. However, he is not a simple anti-hedonist, but believes in some divine higher pleasure which awaits the true devotee, and which is not an unworthy goal.

With regard to metaphysical doctrine we shall see how closely Olympiodorus can be seen to adhere to the outline of Ammonian doctrine given by Verrycken (1990a, 226): one might claim of Olympiodorus too that ‘the henads disappear; the Demiurge seems to be simply identified with divine Intellect; there is not much left of Proclus’ construction of innumerable triads; the articulation of the intelligible world at levels between the divine Intellect and the sensible world has been blurred.’ We would doubt that Olympiodorus too ‘is inclined to remodel the hierarchy of ontological levels into a dichotomy between the creative and created’, though he does not deal with the kind of text that would invite this dichotomy. We may affirm that ‘the Intellect and the One are frequently taken together in the notion “God (*ho theos*)”.’ It is likewise clear that Olympiodorus is perfectly capable of separating these hypostases, and indeed aspects of Intellect, when he chooses: at 4.3 and 47.2 the transcendence of the first principle is stated unequivocally, while at 47.3 it is clear that Kronos, identified with *pure* Intellect, is one of those powers below the first cause. It is likewise evident that Kronos’ role is different from that of Zeus, who plays the primary demiurgic role here (0.4, 49.6).

Soul, unfortunately, is not treated sufficiently hypostatically for us to confidently state whether in this commentary it ‘is sometimes decoupled from the first two levels of reality and considered as “caused by God”.’ What one may state is that this is true of *our* souls. Only their rational portion is immortal (2.1), indeed only their rational portion is really us (18.2), and even so we are the dregs of the universe separated from the transcendent first cause by innumerable other powers (47.2). Olympiodorus is drawn into talking more hypostatically about soul when allegorizing the ancient gods. At 4.3 Hera seems to stand for rational soul at the universal level, whereas Prometheus takes on the function of universal guardian of the rational soul at 48.6; here it is made quite plain that rational soul belongs on high and that Zeus at least wants it to stay there! So that one suspects that Olympiodorus does not want to separate *the true nature of soul* very far from Intellect. If we

may see Hera in the true nature of (rational) soul, and Zeus in the demiurgic Intellect, then this is scarcely surprising!

The commentary does not unequivocally affirm that Olympiodorus followed Ammonius<sup>106</sup> in seeing the first principle as both a final and an efficient cause, though efficient causality of a type which bestows upon us our being seems to be implied at 47.2. It is in relation to the science of constitutional well-being that he applies the Neoplatonic doctrine of six causes (0.5), and it is interesting that the final cause is the Good (0.5, 30.1), whereas the efficient cause is the philosophic life (0.5), or virtue (45.1), or well-being itself (46.7). Well-being itself looks very much like the final cause for a human being, but the point to be made is that the philosophic life, and virtue, and well-being are united above all in their goodness. One cannot claim that Olympiodorus has *in this single case* identified the efficient and final causes, but they clearly stand in a close relation to each other. Nothing prevents him identifying the ultimate final and efficient causes of the universe.

Ultimately, however, one must accept that the commentary is itself the best testimony as to Olympiodorus' doctrine within it, and that it is dangerous to judge him according to his conformity or non-conformity with Plotinus, Proclus, Ammonius, Christianity,<sup>107</sup> or any other body of doctrine. The job which is being done here is that of exegesis, not of direct communication of doctrine. This commentary should be judged on its ability to offer a consistent and satisfying interpretation of a text.

## 12. *Overview of the Content of the Commentary*

The commentary consists of a proem and fifty lectures, and the normal procedure is for the lecturer to begin by outlining the overall function of a passage within the *Gorgias*, by resolving difficulties that arise, and by introducing various aids to interpretation. This step is known as the *theoria*. Afterwards it seems that the relevant passage of text was read in class, and the lecturer commented upon a variety of briefer passages, highlighting key steps in the

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<sup>106</sup> For Ammonius, see Verrycken (1990a), 216ff.

<sup>107</sup> Those who want to read further on the relation of Olympiodoran doctrine to Christianity are referred to Westerink (1990), xxii-xxxi.

argument and introducing more specific issues of interpretation, including comments on the text itself.<sup>108</sup>

### Proem

The Proem warrants separate consideration owing to the number of interesting issues raised. S. N. Pieri (1991, p. 1) notes that 'Dialogo diretto, il *Gorgia* entra subito *in medias res*.' Olympiodorus also plunges straight in to the problems which confront the reader who is new to this work. This contrasts with his practice in the *Alcibiades*-commentary, where there had been some general laudatory remarks followed by a life of Plato before the principal introductory topics could begin. However, as it is first in the Platonic curriculum the *Alcibiades* is a special case, and it needed to include material introducing the whole Neoplatonic corpus of Plato's works.

It may seem strange, therefore, that Olympiodorus chooses first to tackle the dialogue form, giving an explanation of the term dialogue, and proceeding to ask why it is that Plato found his own dramatic writings acceptable but not those of the poets. Assuming that the majority (at least) of the listeners have recently become familiar with the *Alcibiades*, why have they not yet been introduced to the important issue of Plato's dramatic writings?<sup>109</sup> There are several possible explanations. First, in a work which needed copious introductory material, less burning issues might be left until an appropriate moment in order to get on with reading the text. Second, with only two characters it looks less like a drama than the *Gorgias*, which uses five in all. Third, Olympiodorus is going to make much of the types which these characters represent, and of the dramatic background—in short the *Gorgias* is more obviously handled like a dramatic work. Fourth, the *Gorgias* is a 'political' work (relevant to man's inner constitution) with which Olympiodorus constantly needs to compare the *Republic*, and it is the *Republic* above all which invites questions about Plato's handling of his own dramatic forms.

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<sup>108</sup> See Festugière (1963).

<sup>109</sup> The extant *Alcibiades*-commentary is not, of course, the record of the course of lectures which these students have taken, but it still gives a general indication of the topics which were likely to have been tackled at that stage, and Platonic drama was not among them.



One should observe too that the question of Platonic drama has been raised in part as a response to criticism, whether from students or from rival intellectual disciplines. Olympiodorus is aiming to defend Plato against charges, possible or actual, of inconsistency, in that he seemed to have practised much the same literary methods as he refused to accept from the poets in the *Republic*—even that he *imitated* the poets whose imitative techniques he himself decries. The solution which Olympiodorus gives is not the superficial one, that Plato was writing *prose* which did less to encourage the emotions, nor even that the moral inferences to be drawn from Platonic drama were superior to those to be drawn from epic and tragedy. The difference belongs to the *scrutiny* which dialogue applies to its characters.<sup>110</sup>

Following this defence Olympiodorus turns (0.2) to the five topics which the proem sets out to tackle: the dramatic background of the work (0.3), its aim or fundamental subject (*skopos*, 0.4-5), its structure (0.6), the characters and their symbolism (0.8), and the suggestion that Plato ought not to be attacking somebody from a previous generation like Gorgias (0.9). Olympiodorus does not announce at this stage that he will tackle the place of the work in the curriculum, and the relevance of constitutional virtues to this (0.6-7). Some of these topics are traditional, and likely to occur at the commencement of *any* Platonic commentary.<sup>111</sup> Debate about the aim or fundamental subject occurs early in the earliest extant Platonic commentary,<sup>112</sup> and is regularly included at the start of commentaries in Neoplatonic times.<sup>113</sup> The division of the dialogue is included in the introductions to both Proclus' and Olympiodorus' *Alcibiades*-commentaries, as are the place of the work in the canon; comparable material, showing the relation of the work to the *Parmenides*, is found in Proclus' great *Timaeus*-commentary. The contrasting characters, however, are not usually tackled so directly at this stage, though comparable material occurs early in

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<sup>110</sup> The final section of the proem, like this first one, can again be seen as a response to criticism of Plato, this time the criticism that he attacked the ways of his elders and betters in a time gone by.

<sup>111</sup> On the issue of standard introductory topics see now Mansfeld (1994), Tarrant (1995).

<sup>112</sup> Anon. *In Thl.* column 2.

<sup>113</sup> E.g. by Syrianus-Hermeias, pp. 8-12 Couvreur, where there is some conflation with the plot; Proclus, who sometimes refers rather to a *πρόθεσις* (*In Alc.*, *In Remp.*); and Ol. *In Alc.* 3-9.

Damascius' work *On the Philebus*. A recent survey of the principles of late Platonist commentaries identified eight regular elements. Of these Olympiodorus omits the utility of the dialogue (*chresimon*) and its type and philosophical character.<sup>114</sup> He also adds the question of generation-chronology. Overall, then, there is no need to feel that Olympiodorus is simply following a traditional formula in his proem, though it certainly includes traditional elements.

Tarrant (1997a) has tackled matters of relevance to Olympiodorus' discussion of the setting, and the generation-chronology in 0.9. Briefly, Olympiodorus makes the following interesting claims, which one might conceivably attribute to reputable sources (0.3):

1. Gorgias was in Athens on an embassy from Leontini concerning as alliance and war with Syracuse.
2. The Athenians called the days of his public displays 'festivals'.
3. They called his rhetorical periods 'torches'.

Such details, when taken together, do not look like something invented in a much later era, even though they are not paralleled in extant literature written long before Olympiodorus' own period. Olympiodorus' credibility as a historian is threatened by what seem to be chronological blunders in 0.9, but here it is almost certain that recorder or scribe have been responsible for obscuring his intentions.

We have discussed the *skopos*-section (above, sections 9-10). However, it would be worth saying something about the way that cause-theory supplements the discussion of the aim of the dialogue and of its sections. Having established that the *Gorgias* is about the *principles* of constitutional happiness, Olympiodorus proceeds to give a list of six ways in which something can be a 'principle': as matter, form, efficient cause, paradigm, instrument, and end. Of constitutional happiness the soul is the matter, justice and temperance the form, the philosophic life the efficient cause, the cosmos the paradigm, habituation and education the instrument, and the good the end. Of these six principles three are seen as being of particular relevance to the *Gorgias*: the arguments with Gorgias himself concern the question of whether rhetoric or philosophy is

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<sup>114</sup> See Hadot, I. *et al.* (1990), Intro., pp. 33f.

the efficient cause of constitutional happiness; those with Polus concern the formal cause, whether it is justice etc. or injustice; those with Callicles concern the final cause, whether it is pleasure or the good. Thus the issue of the fundamental subject of the work has been linked with its tripartite division by the selection of three out of the six principles of constitutional happiness as the topics for three main sections, and so to the characters by the allocation of three different imperfect characters as the interlocutor for the three sections concerned. Olympiodorus thus argues for a close connexion between dramatic aspects of the work and three philosophically distinguishable sections which contribute towards a common philosophic goal.

### **Lecture One: (i) scene-setting**

Olympiodorus believes that the introductory passage of the *Gorgias* serves the important dramatic function of sketching the character of its participants, particularly those who are morally inferior. The type of the interlocutor's soul is depicted, in terms of a particular kind of life, and his words are later subject to the *elenchus* (cf. 0.1). The prominent interlocutor in the introductory passage is Callicles, which fits with Olympiodorus' view that the main subject of the dialogue is constitutional happiness rather than the rhetorical issues associated with Gorgias and Polus.

The connexion between the prologue and the character-type allows Olympiodorus to reaffirm an important lesson from the first *Alcibiades*, the one Platonic work already studied, as well as to introduce another way in which philosophic and poetic characterization differ. Much of the lecture is given over to illustrating, with greater conviction than plausibility, the ways in which Callicles' words already mark him as an inferior character and how much better those of Socrates are (even when he refers to him spending time in the agora, which Olympiodorus views as an unwholesome place). Further observations are made which reflect on the less extreme characters of Gorgias and Chaerephon.

### **Lecture One: (ii) the digression on rhetoric**

Olympiodorus' rhetorical theory commits him to positions that may not seem natural readings of the *Gorgias*. He insists, for

example, on keeping the statesman (true or false) separate from the orator (true or false); he sees rhetoric, correctly studied, as a genuinely worthwhile pursuit, *even if one does not oneself have the moral knowledge on which to base constitutional decisions*; and, in a polemic with the rhetorical tradition, he denies that the four popular fifth-century politicians were 'flatterers'. In Lecture 32 we will see that Ammonius has inspired this view, and that he based his interpretation upon *Republic* 426a-e.

Olympiodorus' position has its roots in the fact that philosophy and rhetoric were now allies, rather than competitors, in a rear-guard action against authority. Justinian's attempt to shut down institutions promoting unsanctioned teaching extended far beyond the schools of philosophy, into the law-schools and beyond. This would force the various champions of classical culture to seek each other's support; a truce between philosophy and rhetoric was essential, particularly bearing in mind that enlightened rhetoric might have provided much of the bread and butter of the Alexandrian school.<sup>115</sup>

The *Gorgias* notoriously presents a more bitter attack on rhetoric than that in the later *Phaedrus*. Just as the *Republic* is constantly relevant for Olympiodorus' reading of the ethical content of the *Gorgias*, so too he consistently has in mind the philosophically acceptable rhetoric of the *Phaedrus* when presenting his interpretation of the *Gorgias* on rhetoric. He assumes that the *Gorgias*, properly read, is consistent with the *Phaedrus*, just as Hermeias does in his commentary on the *Phaedrus*. There is no resort to chronology to distinguish different phases of Plato's thought. Since Plato's works are inspired—totally correct, when properly understood—nothing can be found in one which is incompatible with another. This means that Olympiodorus reads the *Gorgias* with the assumption that there exists a true rhetoric which proceeds according to scientific principles and is subordinate to the true statesman.

Olympiodorus' divisions of rhetoric have important consequences for his picture of the famous Athenian statesmen criticized by Socrates in the *Gorgias*. They are elevated sufficiently

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<sup>115</sup> It is clear that Ol. needed support, state support perhaps having apparently been lost already, and he encouraged his students to believe that sacrifices made in return for one's own education were no real sacrifices. It seems that he did ask for money, but that he tried to operate without set fees (43.2, 40.7). For philosophers who practised as orators and physicians see Westerink (1964).

high to be objects of admiration, while at the same time being obviously liable to the charge of collaborating with democracy. They can be seen, in fact, as the highest examples of democratic statesman. This will clear Plato of the charge of slandering great men brought by Aristides in the second century A.D. and no doubt perpetuated in the rhetorical schools thereafter. Refutation of Aristides' criticisms of Plato is indeed a significant side-issue of the *Gorgias*-commentary.

In Olympiodorus' reading of the dialogue, Plato does not run down rhetoric, properly conceived. Hence for him Socrates' remark about the fifth-century statesmen using neither true rhetoric nor the flattering kind is an indication that they were *better than* flatterers (33.3, 41.18), not that they were *not even successful* flatterers (a more natural reading of 517a). For Olympiodorus these statesmen belong to a third, intermediate kind of rhetoric. This intermediate orator is the servant (δῆλονικός, 1.13, 33.3 etc), who serves a non-aristocratic regime, taking care of its better desires.

The interpretation is not devoid of merit. The term 'servant' occurs in Plato's text (517b-518c), and Socrates admits that he is not *criticizing* the four for being servants (517b2), so that 'servant' is not automatically to be equated with 'flatterer'; he only accuses them of satisfying the *desires* of the city, not of seeking to please it indiscriminately. Hence Olympiodorus can point out that there are good desires as well as bad. Here one may object that (i) Socrates' problem with rhetoric had been founded on the notion that it aims at the city's *pleasure* rather than its good, that (ii) desire-satisfaction and pleasure were closely linked (493-6), and that (iii) the existence of good pleasures (499b) did not stop techniques of pleasure-production being seen as flatteries. Olympiodorus could reply that by 517c-e Plato's dichotomy of craft-like occupations is no longer that between pleasure-producing flatteries and benefit-producing crafts; it distinguishes rather between the occupations which, unable to detect the good themselves, ought to serve another superior art, and those which, with their knowledge of the good, must take control of the others.

What Olympiodorus believes Plato has done is to find a way of salvaging such occupations as cookery as a worthwhile part of society by divorcing them from their natural aim of pleasure-production and making them serve a nobler aim. Within an orderly society occupations that might otherwise serve only to

flatter are able to contribute to higher ends apprehended only by true crafts. Hence Olympiodorus sees the true orator as the servant of the statesman: the statesman knows the good, and the orator carries out his orders.<sup>116</sup> Politically, this is an astute characterization of the role of the orator at a very dangerous time: it makes him seem obedient to authority rather than a threat to it. He becomes a bureaucrat, putting into practice the will of the government, ensuring that its decisions receive the best publicity. Olympiodorus conceives the orator's role as akin to that of the apothecary, dispensing the doctor's medicines: rhetoric thus appears less of a threat to the ruler.

Olympiodorus postulates *five* kinds of orators, constitutions, and statesmen (1.13). True rhetoric serves aristocracy, and the rhetoric that serves a democracy would have been expected to be the fourth best, *a* middle kind but not *the* middle kind. But they seem to be graded by Olympiodorus according to the motivation of their practitioners rather than the prevailing constitution, so that the lowest kind is the rhetoric that is pleasure-motivated, and Olympiodorus wants to save the notion of *flattering* rhetoric for this extreme kind; honour-motivated rhetoric is altogether different. The Themistocleans, therefore, come off better than the ordinary orator under a pleasure-loving constitution: though all (lower?) rhetoricians may be compared with the apothecary (cf. 2.4), in a second medical analogy these ones resemble the caring doctor (one who persistently pursues his patients' health even when they don't cooperate) as opposed to the one who readily lets the patient have his own way.

We find in Olympiodorus a lack of precision in sorting out the role of these statesmen and in clarifying the steps which lie between true rhetoric and the worst and most servile kind. There is a slightly uneasy combination of the quinquepartition stemming from the five constitutions and the tripartition (true rhetoric, intermediate rhetoric, flattery) known from Hermeias' commentary on the rhetorical material in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Other divisions of rhetoric occur elsewhere in the Olympiodorus' commentary (e.g. 33.1, 45.1), showing that he is flexible in his division of rhetoric, distinguishing the types that he feels need to be distinguished at a

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<sup>116</sup> To Ol.'s notion that the true orator is the servant of the statesman, compare the presentation of speech-making as an art for the use of the possessor of the royal art at *Euthd.* 289c ff.

given point in the discussion. His interpretations perhaps have an eye on what is most expedient at a particular time, but in charity his lack of clarity reflects a pervasive imprecision in Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic*.

### **Lectures 2-10: The Elenchus of Gorgias**

Olympiodorus interprets Gorgias as a confident fellow (3.12), who has just completed a display of his rhetorical skill as the dialogue opens, and who follows it by offering to answer all questions, as Socrates arrived (2.5). He is, however, externally-motivated and compliant (1.8). Socrates asks via Chaerephon about Gorgias' profession, and at first Polus replies: inadequately. When Gorgias is induced to answer for himself Socrates ascertains that he practises rhetoric. Then Socrates asks 'what is rhetoric knowledge of?' Gorgias' answer 'speech', fails to grasp that not all speech is rhetoric, and that rhetoric also involves silence. Socrates does not want to embarrass Gorgias but to benefit him, so is polite, kindly, and asks further about the sort of speech that rhetoric deals with (4.8). In response Gorgias praises rhetoric as dealing with most important matters; he fails to say what sort of speech it deals with, or about what sort of matters it makes its speeches (5.1). Socrates (tactfully) criticizes Gorgias' answer on two grounds, as ambiguous and unclear, stressing competition from doctor, trainer, businessman (5.6). Finally, Gorgias states the primary concern of rhetoric, i.e. persuasion, its goal, and its materials, justice and injustice (6.1). Socrates invites Gorgias to refute or be refuted, and though the latter seeks to escape, he is shamed into complying, and unwillingly agrees (8.2).

Gorgias then suggests that the orator is knowledgeable about justice (he shares the common notion that that each craft seeks knowledge of its subject-matter, 11.2) but also that he is capable of committing injustice (because he is ignorant): implying that the orator deals with both justice and injustice, but also, retreating, he says rhetoric has a power that inclines two ways, to injustice and to justice, although he spurns injustice. (9.1, 10.4). Socrates refutes him, by revealing his inconsistency, but criticises him gently and reasonably: if rhetoric concerns justice and injustice, it understands their nature, and, as understanding is unchanging, so it always embraces justice. How then could it also incline towards

the wicked (9.1)? Socrates refutes Gorgias (1) demonstratively, from the facts (establishing a contradiction, that the orator is entirely ignorant of justice, 10.1ff.); (2) from the manner, employing embarrassment (revealing that the orator is uneducated and not fine, 8.3, 9.2). In this first elenchus, Socrates demonstrates that rhetoric is *not* the creative cause of constitutional happiness (11.1). This is Olympiodorus' view of the dialogue's unity, linking the theme of the first part (rhetoric) with the subject of the dialogue as a whole.

Several important topics emerge during these lectures. Among them are the knowledge of causes (*aitiai*) in politics (2.4), different logical procedures and the variety of steps between sensation and the acquisition of craft (3.1-2), theology (4.3), types of persuasion (6.1-2, 11), power (7.1), and the involuntary nature of wrongdoing (10.3). Explanations given frequently pay attention to historical details (4.14, 5.3, 6.2), and space is often allotted to moral lessons supposedly detectable from the text, (2.8, 3.4, 8.11), particularly those involving teacher-pupil relations (2.10, 5.12, 6.4, 6.7-9, 8.1).

### **The Arguments with Polus: Lectures 11-24**

While there would be few modern commentators who did not presume that Plato intends to convey some positive lessons in the course of the arguments with Polus, most would nowadays see more significance in the fact that Polus' views are being challenged and refuted. Some sections of the argument, such as the definition of 'the fine', can be regarded as *ad hominem*, tailored to suit the requirements of the occasion. That would suit the earlier ancient belief which classed the *Gorgias* as an 'anatreptic', or 'overturning', dialogue.

It is significant, however, that Olympiodorus sees constant positive instruction for the reader throughout this section. While we might ask ourselves whether Polus is really so wrong, and whether Socrates does in fact refute him, Olympiodorus takes Socrates' familiarity with the truth and Polus' error for granted. Moreover he grounds the knowledge of Socrates in the common notions, those infallible guides to universal truth (particularly moral truths) that all are supposed to have access to, however few may listen. Polus errs simply by failing to heed these notions consistently. Socrates must use Polus' assent to propositions deriving from the



common notions which he does recognize in order to show him that he has a set of beliefs from which the contrary of his erroneous thesis can be deduced. Olympiodorus, as more recently Vlastos (1983) who also bases his theory on the *Gorgias*, relies on the presence of moral truths *latent* within the interlocutor and *openly recognized* by Socrates. These truths are themselves the gift to mankind of a provident divinity (38.3).

There are perhaps two areas of principal interest in these pages of the *Gorgias* today: (i) the Socratic view of power and impotence, involving the distinction between means and end and the assumption that the true object of our will is always the end rather than the means; and (ii) the argument for proving that it is better (*qua* more beneficial) to be wronged than to do wrong. Olympiodorus certainly does not belittle these sections, indeed power and impotence are recurrent themes throughout his treatment of the *Gorgias*. But he also dwells on the classification of crafts and 'flatteries' and the theory of 'the fine' as if cast-iron doctrine were to be found here rather than clever polemic in the first case and a working hypothesis in the second. The classification of crafts offers an excellent example of a late Platonist attempt to emulate the practice of dichotomic division prominent in *Sophist*, *Politicus*, *Phaedrus*, and *Philebus*—all works belonging to the late Neoplatonic corpus.

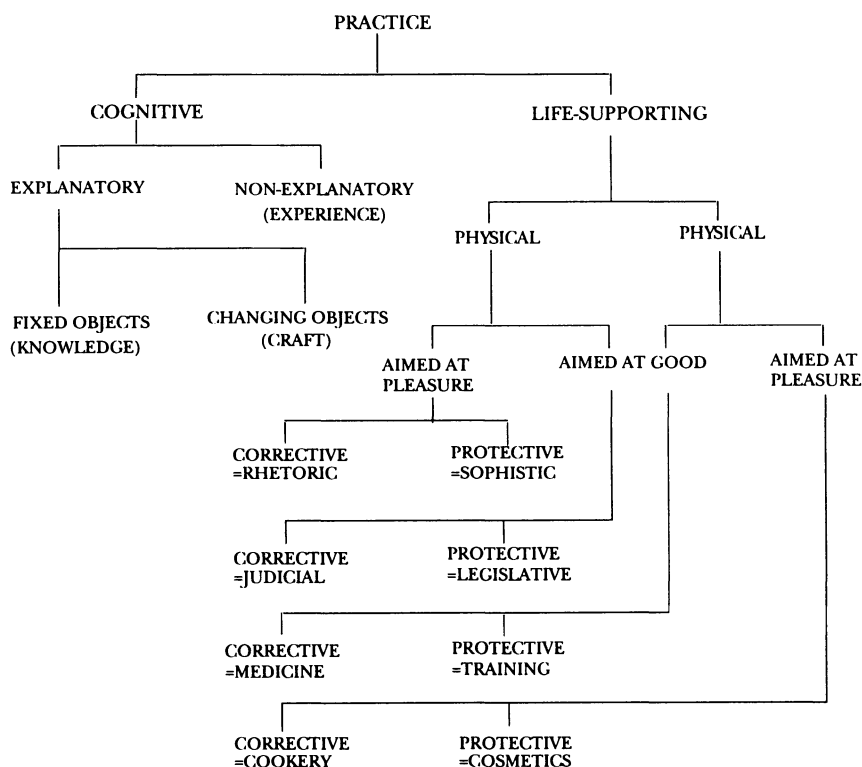
Olympiodorus' overall view of the message of these chapters is clear: while the arguments with Gorgias had challenged the view that rhetoric is the productive cause of constitutional happiness, those with Polus are designed to challenge the view that its formal cause is injustice; in fact Socrates is seen as arguing consistently and conclusively here towards the conclusion that justice is the formal cause of this happiness.

Lecture 12 is important in that it further develops the concept of rhetoric: it conforms with all the Stoic requirements of a craft, but falls short of Socratic, Platonic, or Aristotelian demands in the following ways:

1. It lacks understanding of its subject-matter;
2. It cannot explain what it is trying to achieve;
3. It fails to aim at the good, for it promotes injustice;
4. It has no unswerving rule by which to measure its performance.

Olympiodorus explains the theory underlying Socrates' concept of rhetoric (or popular rhetoric as he insists), showing that even he felt as uncomfortable as we do today (cf. Irwin, p.130) about the close connexion which Plato assumes to exist between a practice aiming at pleasure (i.e. a flattery) and one cognitively grounded in experience alone.

Lecture 13 then sets out the dichotomic division of 'practice' which will result in the isolation of rhetorical practice. It is interesting that Irwin, drawing attention to 454e, notes 'Socrates' procedure here ... suggests an interest in systematic division and classification which Plato does not discuss theoretically until later dialogues.' With no concept of the chronological development of the Corpus Platonicum, Olympiodorus has no reason not to assume that the theory of the *Sophist* operates in the background here too.



Lecture 17 and beyond are particularly interesting for their own contribution to the debate over the merits and demerits of justice and injustice. Olympiodorus imports into the world of the *Gorgias* a powerful sense of the workings of cosmic justice and injustice, which has the consequence that nobody actually suffers unjustly.

Lecture 21 is of special interest. For Olympiodorus *Gorgias* 474d ff. gives an accurate definition of 'the fine' in terms of its being either pleasant or useful or both. There is no hint that this section may be *ad hominem*, even though the definition here in terms of what is pleasant and/or useful fails to meet the Socratic requirement for a definition that some *one* explanatory factor should unite and explain *all* instances of the *definiendum*. It is in fact open to similar objections to those which apply to the final definition of the *Hippias Major* in terms of what is visually and/or aurally pleasant (298e ff.). Has the *Gorgias* done without fuss what a definition-dialogue set out to do and was unable to achieve? As befits a Neoplatonist, Olympiodorus finds something hierarchical in the order in which Socrates introduces the different types of thing which may be 'fine', perhaps remembering the comparable ascending order at *Symposium* 210a ff. The hierarchy appears to end for Olympiodorus in something *both* beneficial *and* pleasant in the highest sense.

When, in Lecture 23, Olympiodorus praises Plato for not relying on traditional threats to deter us from injustice, but trying rather to show a direct connexion between acts of injustice and an inner condition which destroys our happiness, he displays the ability to think in a surprisingly Socratic manner for a Neoplatonist, believing in the primacy of soul-care in the quest for happiness.

There is considerable comparison in these Lectures between Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles concerning the equations which they accept, and their distance from the common notions. Olympiodorus' treatment of Polus sticks to the level of theory; he is no psychologist of crime. Thus he seeks not to understand the motivation behind the views expressed—views which must have been very common—but to list the errors which Polus makes in premises or inferences. Here he is assisted by his belief that Socrates is unquestionably right, failing to grasp that Socrates' position against Polus is repeatedly meant to strike the reader as paradoxical—to counter-balance the normal picture rather than to establish the truth of its opposite.

Throughout the arguments with Polus we see Olympiodorus as the dedicated moral teacher striving to get his message across to the pupil, presenting Plato as a respectable guide to conduct in a largely Christian and overwhelmingly religious age. At the close of the section his role as a shepherd of society is even more in evidence than usual. An ally here is the Stoic moralist Epictetus, utilized in Lectures 17 and 24, and there is sympathy with the Stoic moral doctrine of *apatheia* (freedom from the passions), which the sage will experience even on the rack (21.5).

### **Socrates v Callicles on Ethics: Lectures 25-31**

The assumed purpose of the arguments with Callicles is to establish that the final cause of constitutional happiness is not pleasure but the good (25.1, 29.1, 30.1, 46.7). This purpose is essentially achieved during the earlier, essentially ethical part of the discussion, which Olympiodorus deals with in the first seven lectures; this leaves the remainder of the argument with Callicles to consider the implications of the finding for the constitutional life of the city.

Olympiodorus does not afford Callicles the respect which he commands among modern commentators, since of all the interlocutors he is perceived as being furthest from the common notions, and unable to lift his head for long above the mire of the passions into which he sinks: in this he is thought to resemble Sisyphus (42.1, 45.1, cf. 50.1). Olympiodorus thus finds less here to discuss than we should, and 20% of the dialogue is treated in only 14% of the lectures. By far the most interesting of these are those dealing with Socrates' six lines of attack against the hedonistic underpinning of Callicles' ethics (29-31), and they have been treated at length by Lycos (1994), who brings out what is distinctive about Olympiodorus' approach. Here it is remarkable that Olympiodorus gives considerable attention to what we might see as simply unsettling tactics on Socrates' part, including the appeal to Euripides, the use of myth or allegory, and the production of counter-examples. It is not that the two formal arguments against the equation of pleasure with the good are ignored, but they are treated together as one line of attack, given far less analysis than we should wish to see today, and afforded no special demonstrative status. Treatment of the water-carriers myth raises interpretative issues that will surface again in relation to the major myth which brings the *Gorgias* to a conclusion.

Otherwise the most interesting lecture here is 27 with its treatment of Callicles' allegations of ambiguity, the nature of ambiguity itself, and the requirements of a satisfactory reply to Callicles' rejection of convention in favour of nature.

### **Socrates v Callicles on Oratory and Statesmanship: Lectures 32-45**

Olympiodorus' concern to minimize Plato's criticism of famous Athenian statesmen colours the whole of this section. He is consciously trying to counter the influence of the second century orator Aristides, who had tried to defend the statesmen at Plato's expense. Lecture 32 already introduces the Four (Miltiades, Themistocles, Cimon, and Pericles), and the section ends with another blast at Aristides (45.3) after a spirited defence of the statesmanship of Theseus and Lycurgus (44-45.1), who had been seen as candidates for the same criticisms that Plato levels against the Four. With this may be compared Olympiodorus' defence of Socrates and Plato against the same charges in Lecture 41. Sinister reference to the contemporary political scene creeps in at 45.2, and it is possible that the original listeners would have noticed a number of veiled lessons on contemporary politics.

Olympiodorus develops further his concept of rhetoric during these pages, including using *Rep.* 4, as Ammonius had done, to argue for the existence of an intermediate kind of orator, to which the Four could then be attributed (32). The worst kind, demagogic oratory, is compared with music and drama in 33. Rhetoric and statesmanship are more clearly distinguished now.

There is some interesting discussion of Socratic ethics, including a treatment of the doctrine of the co-implication of the virtues which is related to Olympiodorus' own world rather than to the details of *Grg.* (35). Lecture 37 treats Socratic theme that all wrongdoing is involuntary, and Lecture 40 stresses the need for statesmanship to be based on knowledge. Moral themes of Olympiodorus' own are also in evidence, particularly in Lectures 39 and 43, in the latter case extending to the appropriate relationship between pupil and philosopher (43.2, cf. 42.3).

Regarding politics, Olympiodorus' admiration for aristocracy is much in evidence, whether that involves a single ruler or a group. Olympiodorus' own examples of aristocrats include only legendary figures like Theseus and Lycurgus (44) and the Pythagoreans

(46). The system is seen as imitating the ideal governance of the universe (42). In conformity with *Grg.*, the true statesman, who willingly operates only within an aristocracy, is concerned to improve the citizens rather than to ensure their safety or to provide wealth.

### The Myth: Lectures 46-50

Neoplatonist interpretation of myths is a subject which has attracted considerable attention.<sup>117</sup> That the status and interpretation of Plato's eschatological myths were important to Olympiodorus is evident not only here, but also in his criticism of Aristotle's failure to make allowances for the different intentions of mythical material (*In Mete.* 144.7-14). The myth of the *Gorgias* is seen as moving on from final cause to paradigmatic cause, a topic which has already crept into the discussion at 35.15, where it was stated, in relation to *Grg.* 507d-508c, that the paradigmatic cause of constitutional happiness was not tyranny but the universe. This is repeated at 46.7, in such a way as to make it clear that Olympiodorus views the myth as an insight into the very governance of the universe: though particularly into its judicial arrangements.

The challenge for Olympiodorus here is to give whatever in the myth he thinks has the status of doctrine a different basis from what he believes has only allegorical truth. He will need to use allegorical interpretation to explain away features of the story which are not acceptable, whether from the purely philosophical point of view or in order to mollify Christian hostility. But he does not want to deny the truth of the theory of transmigration of souls or to question that the departed soul experiences perfect judgments in its non-bodily existence, and that if it has erred it will be punished in some way that will be painful for it, even without the body.

The necessity of allegorical interpretation of myths was widely acknowledged by Neoplatonists, and this applied particularly to the stories of gods, other higher powers, and heroes encountered in poets such as Homer and Hesiod. The rehabilitation of these poets depended on one being able to scoff at the idea that these stories could possibly be taken literally. Philosophers however had to be

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<sup>117</sup> See for instance Pépin (1965, 1976), Coulter (1976), Sheppard (1980), Hadot (1981), Lamberton (1986, 1992), Kuisma (1996).

treated differently, particularly as they themselves had scoffed at the excesses of the myths of the poets; their superiority consisted in the fact that their myths are edifying at the surface level too. Hence Olympiodorus develops a distinction prefigured already in Proclus between poetic and philosophic myths, and maintains that philosophic myths differ in having a surface meaning which is not in itself absurd or harmful when believed: this makes it more likely that they will be taken literally, but less harmful whenever they are taken in this way. He also maintains that philosophic myths are frequently punctuated by doctrinal sections (49.3). Thus he is able to treat the surface meaning fairly literally when he chooses, and to claim that some parts do have a status akin to the carefully argued parts of the dialogue.

In fact it may be surprising to us that an interpreter like Olympiodorus, intent that correct interpretation of a myth must penetrate to its hidden depths, can accept so much of what he reads with as much credence as a Platonist would have given to Timaeus' account of the origins and workings of the universe, treating it in effect as a likely story. The main reasons why he has to indulge in allegorical interpretation at all are (i) the rejection of any temporal sequence in divine management of the incorporeal realm, so that 'before' and 'after' must be explained away, (ii) the necessity of relating divine names in the original to acceptable features of Platonist (and if possible Christian) metaphysics or psychology, and (iii) the necessity of explaining away the physical geography of the mythical underworld. The main interest in the interpretation concerns the reduction of the story of different types of judgment in different eras, to the doctrine of two judgment-processes always taking place: people are always judged inaccurately in this life thanks to the bodily trappings, but there is always an accurate and 'naked' judgment in the other world to which the soul reverts at death.

Something which one might have expected to have been made clear during the exposition of the myth is the way such beings as Kronos and Zeus accorded with Olympiodorus' theology. As early as 0.4 it was revealed that the myth concerns the demiurge, and it seems that Zeus is being regarded there as an essentially demiurgic power, exercising control over this world in a way that would be foreign to Kronos (pure intellect). He is still afforded great powers of foreknowledge, since by his very being he produces this

world, and knows all that happens here (49.1). And he is, of course, seen as the overseer of the judgment process. His exact relationship to Posidon and Pluto is less than clear, except in so far as his authority is supreme in the heavenly realm, while Pluto and Posidon lord it over the early and intermediate realms respectively (47.4). One might detect here a typical Neoplatonic demi-urgic triad. Zeus' superiority to Pluto is evident at 48.2, where the latter 'reverts' to him. It is likely that Olympiodorus is himself working with a more developed theology, but that he is doing his best to avoid adverse publicity by not openly revealing it. As these chapters reveal, he was not of the opinion that the highest mysteries can be revealed to the uninitiated (46.6 etc.), so that, assuming that this course of lectures was not for an élite, he must have felt obligated not to reveal too directly what Plato had chosen to conceal.

Issues raised as a result of reading the myth and its aftermath, chiefly ones concerned with punishment, bring the commentary to an end. In accordance with usual practice, there is no *zusammenfassung*, not even a reflection of how it was that the myth had supposedly introduced us to the paradigmatic cause of constitutional happiness. However, we may assume that it was thought to reveal the exemplary order of the higher world, as seen particularly in its judgment processes. Universal justice is the paradigm which the individual may use for ensuring that the formal cause of constitutional happiness, individual justice, is nourished, by philosophy and with a view to the good, within his or her own internal constitution. Again, it should be no surprise if some reading between the lines is required to extract the maximum value from the text.



*About the Translation, Notes, and Abbreviations*

The text translated is that of L.G. Westerink except for a few departures to which we draw attention in the notes. Lemmata from Plato's *Gorgias* are taken with as few changes as possible from the translation by T. Irwin (Plato: *Gorgias*, Oxford Clarendon Plato Series, 1979), by permission of Oxford University Press. Square brackets have been used where additional words, for which there is no remote equivalent in the Greek text, are needed either for clarity or for the flow of the English. We suggest that readers normally read the bracketed words, but pay particular attention to their status if using details of the translation for scholarly purposes. Some terms cause special difficulties for the translators, and may require different handling in different contexts. Apart from technical terms (such as αἰτία, ἐπιστήμη, θυμός), we had particular problems with ἀμέλει, which, while *meaning* something like 'of course' usually has the *function* (like also οὕτω γοῦν in this commentary) of introducing a case which illustrates a preceding statement.

The first note on each lecture gives a brief idea of its content, while further footnotes take up matters of philosophical or historical interest, explain philological points, and address other matters which are likely to be obscure to the reader. Where necessary they attempt to reconstruct arguments which have been obscured by sloppiness on the part of the lecturer, the recorder, or the copyist. An important overall purpose of the notes is to demonstrate the considerable interest which a text such as this can still have as long as it is treated with due seriousness and not judged solely on the basis of the help that it can offer the modern reader of *Gorgias*. Particular attention has been paid to the understanding of Olympiodorus' reading of Plato overall.

Abbreviations have ordinarily followed established conventions, with longer abbreviations occasionally being preferred where confusion is likely (e.g. Dem. rather than D. for Demosthenes). The following should be noted: Olympiodorus is regularly referred to as Ol., and Westerink is often referred to as W. in relation to his edition of this Commentary. The anonymous *Prolegomena to Plato's Philosophy*, a crucial text for the study of Olympiodorus, is

abbreviated simply *Prol.*, and all references to *Prol.* are to this work *except where the name of Albinus is present*. Abbreviations for commentaries regularly include *In* before a normal abbreviation for the work being commented upon. *Alc.* always refers to the first *Alcibiades* of Plato, and *In Alc.* to commentaries on that dialogue.

OLYMPIODORUS'  
COMMENTARY ON PLATO'S *GORGIAS*



COMMENTARY WITH THE GRACE OF GOD ON PLATO'S  
GORGIAS, TAKEN FROM THE SPOKEN WORDS OF  
THE GREAT PHILOSOPHER OLYMPIODORUS<sup>1</sup>

**Proem<sup>2</sup>**

0.1. Note that a dialogue contains characters in conversation, and it is for this reason, because they have characters, that Plato's works are called dialogues.<sup>3</sup> In his *Republic* he criticizes those who produce comedy and tragedy and banishes them, because tragedians encourage our inclination towards grief and comedians our inclination towards pleasure-seeking.<sup>4</sup> So it is worth inquiring why he himself follows their practice and introduces characters.<sup>5</sup> We reply that if we were following the constitution<sup>6</sup> of Plato, those who introduced decadent discussion would actually have to be beaten. But since that is not the way we live, characters are introduced—not untested ones as in drama, but characters subject to scrutiny and chastisement. He criticizes Gorgias, you see, and Polus, Callicles and Thrasymachus, too as shameless and never

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<sup>1</sup> On the traditional phrase 'From the Spoken Words' (ἀπὸ φωνῆς) cf. Richard (1950), 191-222; it has the same meaning as ἐκ τῶν συνουσιῶν, and allows considerable latitude when name of compiler was also used. Reference to recorder errors will be made in the notes where they are suspected.

<sup>2</sup> On the content of the Proem see Intro., 34-37.

<sup>3</sup> On the definition of a dialogue, cf. anon. *Prol.* 14.9-23. Ol. acknowledges the importance of characterization in Platonic writing (cf. further 0.8, 1.1).

<sup>4</sup> W. refers to *Rep.* 3 394b3-398b5. More relevant, however, is *Rep.* 10 605a-606d (cf. Ničev, 1978), where the fault of tragedy and comedy lies in the way they encourage the growth of irrational faculties; cf. 33.3. There must be some uncertainty, considering Ol.'s habit of referring to this dialogue in the plural (see note to 5.4), about whether this reference in the singular really does refer to the dialogue or to the provisions for the ideal state found within it (as in the sentence after next).

<sup>5</sup> Plato's apparent inconsistency in writing dramatically when he also criticizes the dramatists is discussed by Proclus, *In Remp.* 1.49-54. Ol. actually says Plato 'imitates' (μιμεῖται) them, i.e. those whom he himself regards as imitators of imitations (*Rep.* 10): it is unclear whether this is a non-technical usage or whether it reflects rhetorical critics of Plato who had made capital out of this point.

<sup>6</sup> Probably not the name of the dialogue (*Rep.*) but a reference to Plato's preferred system, cf. 5.4.

given to blushing, whereas he praises upright men who live a philosophic life.<sup>7</sup>

0.2. So much for this. Prior to the dialogue we must examine its *dramatic setting*; second its *aim*; third its *structure*; fourth the *characters* and what they symbolize;<sup>8</sup> and fifth the popular question,<sup>9</sup> not of much importance nor an issue among earlier [commentators], why Plato writes about Gorgias when he was not a contemporary of his by quite a long way.

0.3. The *dramatic setting* is as follows: Gorgias of Leontini has come from Leontini in Sicily on an embassy to Athens concerning an alliance and the war with Syracuse, and he has with him Polus, a devotee of rhetoric. They were staying in the house of Callicles, an Athenian demagogue. This Callicles delighted in clever orators, made pleasure the goal of life, and deceived the Athenians by always producing that sentiment of which Demosthenes writes: 'What do you want? What shall I write? How am I to please you?'<sup>10</sup> So Gorgias gave displays, and he so captivated the Athenian people that they called the days on which he gave displays 'feast-days', and his balanced turns of phrase 'torches'.<sup>11</sup>

Hence Socrates, seeing the people being led astray in this way, and because he grasped what was good for all the youth right across the spectrum, determines to save the souls of the Athenians and of Gorgias too. So he does not think it beneath him, but takes Chaerephon the philosopher along with him, the one who is also referred to in the comedy,<sup>12</sup> and proceeds to the house of Callicles;

<sup>7</sup> Thrasyarchus (from *Rep.* 1) and Callicles seem to fit the description better than Gorgias. A problem is that, although Callicles does not blush (cf. 12.10.) Thrasyarchus *does* indeed famously blush (*Rep.* 350d). But Ol. identifies shamelessness as Thrasyarchus' special policy (cf. 1.1, 18.1), thus seeing a systematic connection between Thrasyarchus and shamelessness.

<sup>8</sup> On these topics and their relation to Neoplatonic tradition see Intro., 35-36. Note the logic behind the order: the division of the dialogue is closely related to its aim, while the characters are closely related to the division.

<sup>9</sup> Obviously fairly recent critics; τὸ ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ζητούμενον suggests something likely to be asked by non-philosophers, possibly including rhetorical authors.

<sup>10</sup> Dem. 3.22; cf. anon. *Prol.* p. 27.50-52W and 1.13, 12.4 below. Ol. recognizes the phrase as Demosthenic mockery of Aeschines' attitude.

<sup>11</sup> On the assumptions of this paragraph, including the notion of Gorgianic 'feast-days' and the title of 'torches' see Tarrant (1997a).

<sup>12</sup> In saying that Socrates does not think it beneath him Ol. is reflecting that he does not display the philosophers' reluctance to assume an active role in worldly affairs, as described in *Rep.* books 6 and 7. Ol. sees Chaerephon, unusually, as a philosopher (cf. 0.8 for his 'medial' role). This may suggest

it is there that the encounters and investigations occur. Socrates took Chaerephon rather than going there by himself, so as to demonstrate how people acquire knowledge and engage in dialogue.

0.4. That completes the dramatic setting. As for the *aim* of the dialogue, different views have been taken of it.<sup>13</sup> Some say that its aim is to discuss rhetoric, and they give it the heading 'Gorgias, or On Rhetoric', but wrongly so.<sup>14</sup> For they describe the whole on the basis of a part. [Socrates] speaks with Gorgias about rhetoric, and it is from this that they derive the aim of the dialogue, even though that discussion is not extensive. And others say that it discusses justice and injustice, because the just are happy and the unjust unlucky and wretched;<sup>15</sup> the more unjust somebody is, the more wretched he is too; the more chronic his injustice, the more wretched still; and if it is immortal he is far more wretched still. These people too extract the aim of the dialogue from a part of it, i.e. from the arguments against Polus. Others say that the aim is to speak about the creator, since in the myth [Socrates] speaks of the creator as we shall learn.<sup>16</sup> Their view too is strange and highly selective. We say that the aim is to speak about *the ethical principles that lead to constitutional well-being*.<sup>17</sup>

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his knowledge of some lost source for Chaerephon, possibly the first version of Aristophanes' *Clouds* rather than the extant (revised) edition, where Chaerephon is mentioned at lines 104, 144-7, 503-4, 831, and 1465, and portrayed virtually as Socrates' deputy, without his having any obvious speaking role. The availability of a special Chaerephon mask by 422 B.C. is made likely by his brief appearance in the *Wasps*.

<sup>13</sup> Ol. takes a polemical stance on the aim (σκοπός) of the dialogue, its overall theme, preferring a more general answer (involving ethics and politics) to various examples of more restricted themes. The question reflects a debate about (i) the classification of the dialogue, prompted by the variety of its subject-matter, and (ii) whether or not to seek an esoteric theme. See Intro. 23-24.

<sup>14</sup> The theme of *Grg.* is rhetoric: apparently Thrasyllus, D.L. 3.59; also Galen (?) in al-Farabi's account of Platonic philosophy, *Plato Arabus II* (Tarrant, 1993, 32-38). The view is again criticized in anon. *Prol.* 22.

<sup>15</sup> The theme of the *Grg.* is justice: these persons are referred to also in anon. *Prol.* 22, and there too considered to be taking into account only part of the work. Such criticism of a proposed σκοπός is known also from Proc. *In Prm.* 631.1-4.

<sup>16</sup> Note Ol.'s characteristically brusque rejection of this quasi-mystical interpretation, an esoteric view of a Neopythagorean character, probably associated with Iamblichus. See Intro., 23-28.

<sup>17</sup> Ol.'s own view, the theme of *Grg.* is constitutional well-being (πολιτική εὐδαιμονία). The notion is not to be understood simply, either in a modern sense of political well-being, or as the social well-being of the polis (hardly a

0.5.<sup>18</sup> Since we have referred to principles and constitutional organization, come, let us speak about principles generally and about constitutional well-being, and describe the principles of constitutional science. There are six principles of each thing: matter, form, creative cause, paradigm, instrument, end.<sup>19</sup> As *matter* for a builder there is his wood; as *form* there is the plank<sup>20</sup> or some such shape; the *creative cause* is the builder himself; the *paradigm* is what he had derived his mental plan from before building; as an *instrument* he may have a saw perhaps or an axe; the *end* is that for which it has been brought into being. The majority of orators—those who do not look to the truth—say that the matter of constitutional [well-being]<sup>21</sup> is the living body, the form is luxury, the creative cause is rhetoric, the paradigm is tyranny—for tyrants have universal control, they claim, and one should gain such mastery in this case too—the instrument is persuasion, and the end is pleasure. That is what these people say.

We say that the *matter* [of constitutional well-being] is *the soul*—not the rational soul, but the tripartite soul, for it resembles the division of the city. And just as in cities there are ruler, soldiers and also the labouring class, so too in us: to the ruler there corresponds our reason, and to the soldier the drive, which is intermediate in as much as it obeys reason, but instructs and organizes the labourers, i.e. desire.<sup>22</sup> So the matter is this tripartite soul,

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meaningful entity under the Byzantine empire), but rather as the well-being which the individual derives from the well-being of his own internal πολιτεία or inner constitution. See further, Intro., 28-31.

<sup>18</sup> The majority of this chapter is translated, after a fashion, by Siorvanes (1996), 89-90.

<sup>19</sup> This sort of cause-theory is found prominently in Proclus (e.g. *In Tim.* 1.2.2-4.5; see also Siorvanes, 1996, 88-98) and often adopted by the later Neoplatonists. A division into five major causes is traceable in Plutarch of Athens (*Proc. In Prm.* 1059.11-19), and in the Platonism known to Seneca (*Ep.* 65.7-10). Galen also knows of five Platonic 'causes' in the *De Usu Partium* (6.12-3, 339ff. Helmreich), but substitutes the *sunaition* for the paradigmatic cause.

<sup>20</sup> It would seem that τὸ ἀβάκιον is normally a drawing board, but this cannot be the formal cause of a building. We are grateful to Professors van Winden and Runia for suggesting 'plank' as the most plausible translation here.

<sup>21</sup> It is not wholly clear what one should supply here. We have recently heard of constitutional science (πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη) but one would assume that orators would see their art as creative cause of political well-being rather than of political science.

<sup>22</sup> The tripartite soul and the analogy with the three classes of the city goes back to *Rep.* 4 427c-444a, but Ol.'s view of the central position of the



because the statesman will have passions and desires as and when they are necessary or appropriate. For just as the high-pitched string is in tune with the low-pitched string and emits the same tone, only sharper, so too his desire is conjoined with reason.<sup>23</sup>

The *form* [of constitutional well-being] is *justice* and *temperance*. The *creative cause* is the *philosophical life*. The *paradigm* is the *cosmos*,<sup>24</sup> since the statesman arranges everything with his eye on the universe, which is brimming with order, for Plato called the universe ‘arrangement’, not ‘disarray’.<sup>25</sup> And habits and education are the instrument. And the end is the good. And note that the good is double, one part going with us as we mature, and the other as we decline. The former is the *constitutional* good, the latter the *contemplative* good.<sup>26</sup>

0.6. [Socrates] converses with Gorgias about the creative cause, with Polus about the formal cause, and with Callicles about the final cause. But although that is so, do not be surprised if all the topics appear throughout the work. For in the creative cause the other causes are also found, and they all appear in the others.<sup>27</sup> For there is a close connexion between them and they interpenetrate, but it is according to their dominant element that they are arranged [here]. Hence the *structure* of the dialogue is clear. It is

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θυμοειδές (here translated drive because of the ambiguity of ‘spirit’) is not supported there. His view of this part as passing down orders does not easily agree with Plato’s analogy of charioteer, obedient horse, and disobedient horse (*Phdr.* 253c ff.).

<sup>23</sup> The musical analogy which Ol. uses here was perhaps suggested by *Rep.* 4 443d3-e2. There is an overall comparison between a three-stringed instrument, in which the upper and lower strings are an octave apart (the third being at an interval of a fourth) and the ‘correctly tuned’ tripartite soul. For the relation between the strings see [Arist.] *Prob.* 19.919b1 ff., nos. 23, 24, 35, 39, 41, 42, Barker (1989), 92-97.

<sup>24</sup> W. cites the obvious Platonic passage, *Rep.* 9 592b2-3. Also relevant is *Tim.* 90c-d.

<sup>25</sup> I.e. κόσμος, not ἀκοσμία. cf. *Grg.* 507e-508a.

<sup>26</sup> This notion seems related to the Neoplatonic distinction between the constitutional virtues, tackled by *Grg.*, and the contemplative virtues, tackled by such works as *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*.

<sup>27</sup> The interpenetration of causes was a recurrent theme in Neoplatonism, and stems partly from interpretation of Plato’s demiurge, partly from the way three kinds of causation are supposed to be traced to Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover in *Met.* 12. W. cites Syr. in *Met.* 82.2-14, 106.30ff., Proc. *Theol.* 5.17.61.10-14SW, in *Tim.* 3. 226.5-18, in *Prm.* 910.36ff., Dam. in *Phlb.* 114 etc. Three kinds of causation, at most, are relevant to these passages.

divided into three, the arguments with Gorgias, the part containing the arguments with Polus, and the part with Callicles.<sup>28</sup>

The *order* of the dialogues is also clear. For having learnt in the *Alcibiades* that we are soul, and rational soul at that, we ought to establish both its constitutional virtues and its purificatory ones.<sup>29</sup> Hence, since we should understand constitutional matters first, this dialogue is necessarily read after that one, and next comes the *Phaedo*, which deals with the purificatory virtues.<sup>30</sup>

0.7. Note that we have specified justice and temperance in particular as the form of constitutional [well-being].<sup>31</sup> We must understand that all virtues contribute to it, but these ones above all. That is why [Socrates] is constantly referring to these two as neglected among men.<sup>32</sup> As for the other two,<sup>33</sup> men want to know them, if not thoroughly, then at least superficially and in the

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<sup>28</sup> This manner of division by interlocutor is criticized at anon. *Prol.* 19 using just this example, on the grounds that changes of interlocutor frequently do not imply changes of subject-matter. Ol. clearly believes that in this case shifts of subject-matter do occur, from the creative cause of political well-being, to its formal, and, after a transition, to its final cause. Note that the final myth (without any interlocutor?) is seen later as a fourth part, dealing with the paradigmatic cause, 46.7.

<sup>29</sup> The constitutional virtues are more appropriate to soul seen as an alliance of potentially conflicting faculties as in *Rep.*, while the purificatory ones are more applicable at a level where the rational soul is already dominant as in *Phd.* On Ol.'s species of virtue see also *In Phd.* 8.2-3, 6, etc. and anon. *Prol.* 26, which also concerns the rationale behind the Iamblichan programme of study, linking it with the notion of a variety of grades of virtues. See Intro., 13, 29-30.

<sup>30</sup> The order of Plato's dialogues is discussed in anon. *Prol.* 26. Ol.'s point raises the question of how much further ordinary Platonic education was expected to progress in the Alexandrian school. The programme of Iamblichus had continued with *Crat.* *Th.* *Sph.* *Pl.* *Phdr.* *Symp.* *Phlb.* That we have no Olympiodoran commentary on any of these later works suggests that the three earlier works in the curriculum were more widely (or more freely) studied.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 0.5. In *Rep.* 4 Plato makes both these virtues subject to the correct interrelation of the parts of the soul, hence for Ol. they are obviously 'constitutional' virtues.

<sup>32</sup> In the case of justice it is not difficult to justify this statement (e.g. from the *Apology* and *Crito*). In the case of temperance there is more difficulty. Ol.'s use of the 4 cardinal virtues reflects his regular use of the doctrines of the *Rep.* to explain *Grg.* Note that while 28.2 (end) has men laying claim to wisdom and temperance, 28.3 (end) suggests strongly that that passage should be corrected to agree with 0.7 along the following lines: ὡσαύτως καὶ ἀνδρείας, οὐκέτι δὲ δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης.

<sup>33</sup> I.e. the other two cardinal virtues, courage and wisdom, somewhat abruptly introduced here.

spurious sense of the term,<sup>34</sup> calling themselves 'wise'. Hence they say 'He is wise; he knows how to make a profit.' It is the same with courage too. But these two, [justice and temperance], are neglected. Yet there is a need for them, since they involve all parts of the soul. For just as someone who performs his own task in the city and allocates to each man his due is said to be just, so too justice rules in the soul when the rational part performs its proper task, and also the spirited part, and appetite. And if this is so, then temperance occurs too when each part does not desire what is properly another's.<sup>35</sup>

0.8. Next it is worth investigating the *number* and *symbolism* of the characters. There are five characters: Socrates, Chaerephon, Gorgias, Polus, Callicles. Socrates corresponds to the intelligent and knowledgeable [type of soul], Chaerephon to the rightly-opining,<sup>36</sup> Gorgias to the misguided.<sup>37</sup> For [Gorgias] was not entirely dominated by injustice, he was wavering over whether to be persuaded or not. Polus corresponds to the unjust [character] bent solely on ambition, whereas Callicles corresponds to the swinish and pleasure-loving.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Note that the *Phaedo*-commentary refers to 'spurious virtues' at 8.5-6 and 11-12.

<sup>35</sup> While it is clear that he has in mind the *Republic*, Ol. does not comment on how these two virtues differ, and is inclined later in the commentary too to assume that the pupil is able to distinguish cases of both. Perhaps he follows Plato (432a, 433c, etc.) in making temperance more the *harmony of will* needed between the parts of the constitution in agreeing on appropriate roles, while seeing justice rather as the *simple performance* of appropriate roles.

<sup>36</sup> This apparently does not conflict with the description of Chaerephon as a *philosophos* at 0.3.

<sup>37</sup> The term *διστραμμένος* does not require this meaning, but 'warped' or 'perverted' seems inappropriate; it appears from 27.2 (*διδάστροφος*) that the translation 'misguided' would be better, though an alternative might be 'easily influenced' for the term may relate to Ol.'s standard view of Gorgias as 'externally motivated', see 1.8, 6.1. At any rate 27.2 seems to confirm that Gorgias' problem relates to his rational faculty rather than to the excesses of the irrational faculties. A distinct possibility is that the mental 'warping' envisaged by Ol. is the distortion of the soul's circuits on entering the physical world, so that they need then to be rectified by the contemplation of the circuits of the heavens, *Tim.* 43a-44c. Such warping is there the product of external motivation as opposed to the natural, internal, circular psychical motion. Proclus uses the term *ἀδιδάστροφος* in relation to the circuits of the soul at *In Tim.* 2.314.29 and 3.333.24, and more frequently for uncorrupted common/natural notions, *In Alc.* 104, *In Tim.* 1.168.25, 328.10 etc. See A. Ph. Segonds (1985) on *In Alc.* 104.

<sup>38</sup> Ol.'s analysis depends on an elaborate psychic tripartition, as in 1.13 below. W. compares Proc. *In Remp.* 2.176.4-9, where it seems that Callicles is

Some interpreters ask why the orators are three and the philosophers two, i.e. why the number of the orators is indivisible and that of the philosophers divisible.<sup>39</sup> We reply that this is not so. For Socrates resembles the monad, looking towards the One. For God is simple, and underived. Hence the hymn is addressed to him which runs:

'From you all things are made clear, while you alone do not arise from any cause.'<sup>40</sup>

Chaerephon too resembles the monad, but he resembles the enmattered [monad], i.e. one that is inseparable from matter, whereas [Socrates] resembles the separated monad.<sup>41</sup> And because the inferior does not proceed directly to the superior nor the superior directly to the inferior, for this reason Chaerephon occupies the intermediate rank and must act as a bridge between them.<sup>42</sup>

0.9. It remains to ask how [Plato] refers to Gorgias. We say first it is not at all strange that a writer should also refer to men whom he did not know and depict them in conversation. Second we shall say that they [Plato and Gorgias] were in fact contemporaries, for Socrates was alive by the third year of the 77th Olympiad,<sup>43</sup> and

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being associated with love of pleasure and Thrasymachus with love of money. Cf. 27.2.

<sup>39</sup> The Pythagorizing tradition, to which these commentators (Athenian Neoplatonists?) probably subscribe, regarded the odd (indivisible) as superior to the even (divisible), yet the philosophers must not be seen as inferior to the orators. Thus, rather than have Socrates and Chaerephon imitate a dyad, Ol. makes Socrates and his colleague resemble the monad, the supreme number, in different ways.

<sup>40</sup> See also 16.1 for this quotation (also Ascl. *In Met.* 20.28, 123.15). Proclus and Ps.-Dionysius have been candidates for the authorship (Sicherl, 1988). We read ἐκ σοῦ as at 16.1 for the scribe's ἐξ οὗ which would sound virtually identical, but reject πέφυκε (16.1) for πέφηνε as here.

<sup>41</sup> The idea seems to be that the rational or undivided part of Socrates' soul has preserved its independence from matter. For a similar idea see Plutarch *De Genio Socratis* 591d ff. On a cosmic plane note that the distinction between Numenius' second and third Gods is drawn in terms of the latter having been brought into contact with matter and divided by it (fr. 11 des Places). Such ideas were readily adopted by Neoplatonists in their accounts of the fall of the human soul.

<sup>42</sup> On Chaerephon's intermediate position see also 1.7, 1.10, 2.6, 25.1. On a personal level Chaerephon is presumably intermediate between Socrates and the supporters of rhetoric.

<sup>43</sup> I.e. 470 B.C.: Apollodorus gave the fourth year of Olympiad 77, 369 B.C. Ol. has not necessarily confused Socrates' birth-date with his floruit.

<...><sup>44</sup> Empedocles the Pythagorean, Gorgias' teacher, studied with him. And of course Gorgias wrote his rather pretentious work *On Nature* in the 84th Olympiad,<sup>45</sup> so that Socrates came first by 28 years or a little more. And besides, Plato [has Socrates] say in the *Theaetetus*:<sup>46</sup>

'As a real youth I met Parmenides, then very old, and found him profound.'

This Parmenides was the teacher of Empedocles, the teacher of Gorgias. But Gorgias also lived to be very old, since it is reported that he died at the age of 109, so that they were more or less contemporaries. That completes the lecture.

### Lecture 1<sup>47</sup> (447a1-c 4)

1.1. 'They say you ought to join a war and a battle, Socrates' (447a1): poets speak of persons, and so do philosophers. But a person is of two kinds, one seen in the soul, and in what is visible, i.e. in the combination [of body and soul]. Now the poets discuss the combination.<sup>48</sup> That's surely how the poet<sup>49</sup> depicts Nestor saying 'I lived through three generations of people' and he says [of him],

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<sup>44</sup> On the difficulties see Tarrant (1997a). It is probable that Ol. himself had said that Socrates *was born* in 470 B.C. and studied *with Anaxagoras*; and that Empedocles the Pythagorean had taken a course with him (i.e. with Anaxagoras). Socrates was sometimes known as a student of Anaxagoras (D.L. 2.19ff.), and so was Empedocles (Alcidamas in D.L. 8.56). At 14.12 one finds that Gorgias is again said to be a student of Empedocles, and this is linked with Polus' being fond of *Anaxagoras*. The same connexion is found in one of two relevant scholia, 58.16-20 Carbonara Naddei: Polus studied with Gorgias, who studied with Empedocles, who (more generally) understood 'the philosophers' including Anaxagoras. Ol. or a predecessor thus assumed a line from Anaxagoras through Empedocles and Gorgias to Polus. That would make Empedocles an informal student of Anaxagoras, and an intellectual contemporary of Socrates; hence Plato would be of the same intellectual generation as Gorgias.

<sup>45</sup> I.e. 444-1 B.C.

<sup>46</sup> *Thl.* 183e7. It is perhaps odd that Ol. does not refer here to the account of this meeting given in *Prm.* However, the work seems curiously neglected by the Alexandrian Neoplatonists bearing in mind that it was still theoretically the culmination of Platonic studies.

<sup>47</sup> For the content of this lecture see Intro., 37-41.

<sup>48</sup> Man *qua* soul is clearly the doctrine of *Alc.* 130c. Man *qua* combination, though seen as the position of the poets, is also behind the ethics of Antiochus of Ascalon in *Cic. Fin.* 5 (see Dillon, 1977, 71).

<sup>49</sup> As usual Homer is simply 'the poet'. The quotation is from *Il.* 1.249-252.

'from whose lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey',

at all times presenting the combination. Similarly, he makes Helen ask 'Who is that person?' and she says 'That is Ajax' or 'That is Menelaos'. Philosophers, however, say that a person is the soul.<sup>50</sup> Note then that they introduce participants in conversation and assign a character to their lives from what they say. For example, Callicles delivers pleasure-loving speeches, and the pleasure-loving passion dominates his life. Accordingly [Socrates] resists and tries to eliminate such speech. We must understand that ethical precepts belong to right opinion, though the philosophers do not rest content with sayings such as 'accustom yourself to control anger' and 'honour parents'<sup>51</sup> but [only] with demonstrations. For Socrates overcomes Callicles' claims in favour of pleasure-loving and Thrasyarchus' in favour of shamelessness and others' too, and he goes on to refute them so that the victory should not be hollow.<sup>52</sup>

1.2. Let this suffice for that matter. It is after Gorgias' performance that Socrates arrives. So here, in the introduction, there are the following characters: Socrates, Chaerephon, Callicles. Callicles opens by saying to Socrates, 'If there were a war with a battle looming, you would need to be late; for it is good to keep out of these things, so as not to be found suffering as is likely if one willingly gets involved in war. But now, since it was a performance, how is it that you are late?'. He thus attacks Socrates and criticizes him, because he knows neither his own limits nor the superior standards of a philosopher. Note how his pleasure-loving life is revealed by his words: for he says 'If there were a war you ought to be late, so that you would not be killed'.<sup>53</sup> This is a mark of

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<sup>50</sup> 'Philosophers' here are simply Platonists, and not all who would regard themselves as such. Antiochus of Ascalon in the first century B.C. founded his ethics upon the view that man was an essentially composite entity, Cicero *Fin.* 5.34.

<sup>51</sup> *Carm. Aur.* 9-11.

<sup>52</sup> The idea here is that Socrates wants to follow the victory through, so that the opponent is not just suffering a verbal defeat on one occasion, but is unable to fight a renewed battle thereafter.

<sup>53</sup> Ol. seems to misread the character of Callicles, who values courage; see *Grg.* 491b, 499a (not passages that Ol. chooses to dwell on later). However, we should perhaps say that for Ol., Callicles' hedonism is such as to make his protestations about courage—and reliance on Homer—insincere and incredible.

of the body-loving soul, which has nothing courageous in it and does not look to virtue. For it is above all in war that we should not be late, for this, according to poetry, is the action of a 'war-shirker' and a 'weakling'.<sup>54</sup> It is as a lover of the body, then, that [Callicles] makes his comment.

So after Gorgias' exhibition, either in Callicles' house or in a public place, Socrates came with Chaerephon and found Callicles in front of the doors of his house; then Callicles asks him a question typical of a man with his manner of life, and says 'Have you come as in war? As for battle?'—as if it belongs to those with the daring for war to arrive late. This is the mark of those who are body-loving; it is not how we should fight for country or for friends.

1.3. It is worth inquiring why [Socrates] came after the performance and not to the performance itself. We say that had he come to the performance itself one of two things would have happened. Either it would have been necessary for him to keep silent, putting up with Gorgias' bare assertions—but this is alien to one who knows.<sup>55</sup> Or, if he did not remain silent, he would have been the cause of impediment and irritation, forever interrupting and seeking to converse. And besides, as he himself says, he was spending time in the market-place to benefit from more important things, as we shall learn.<sup>56</sup> And it is better to get a firm grasp on the greater than to hasten towards the lesser.

Note that since Callicles has led an uneducated life he begins abruptly with a proverbial saying. For he says 'They say one ought rather to be late in war'. Then Socrates remedies the saying with one of his own, for he says 'But does that mean that we have come after the feast, as the saying goes?'. Observe that it is not the same saying. For [Callicles] introduces an aggressive and body-loving and distressing saying, whereas [Socrates] introduces one about a feast, first because a feast-day is close to God, and secondly because he is speaking riddlingly and poking fun at the Athenians' ignorance in calling the days on which Gorgias performed feast-days.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Homer *Od.* 14.213, *Il.* 2.201.

<sup>55</sup> Bare assertions would be those unsupported by those unsupported by demonstration, which mean little to the Alexandrian school, see 41.9. On Ol.'s treatment of Socratic ignorance see Tarrant (1997b), 184.

<sup>56</sup> See 1.6.

<sup>57</sup> On this material, see Tarrant (1997a).

1.4. **'And a most elegant feast'** (447a5): Callicles says this in praise of the feast and the performance. His lack of education appears here too in his excessive praise, for he says 'most' and adds 'elegant'. But we should neither praise to excess nor denounce to excess. So [Plato] will soon show [Socrates] denouncing rhetoric and saying it has no value.<sup>58</sup>

1.5. **'Many fine'** (447 a7): note that this too is inept, for we should not praise the quantity [of the words] but the words themselves. He adds 'fine' as if he was setting himself up as a judge, but what is Callicles' judgment? Hence everything he says is said in an uneducated manner.

1.6. **'For this, Callicles'** (447 a7): 'The reason I was not to be found there, Callicles,' [Socrates] says, 'is that Chaerephon compelled me to stay a long time in the market-place'. It is worth inquiring in what sense the philosopher 'frequents the market-place', for he ought to lead a quiet life. We say that the pleasure-lover and the money-lover and the honour-lover and the philosopher [do so], but not all in the same way. For the pleasure-lover goes there searching for lovely girls to deceive, the money-lover on the lookout in case he can profit by snapping up something on sale at a good price, the honour-lover so that everyone will notice his good looks and great body, while the philosopher goes there in order to convert misguided youths and lead them on a nobler path. That is how [Socrates] makes Theaetetus, Charmides and Alcibiades temperate.<sup>59</sup> An illustration: a philosopher, being thirsty, has gone into an inn and drunk water. As he was coming out he has been met by someone who was coming from a temple, who says to him 'A philosopher coming from an inn?' To which [the philosopher] replies 'I come from the inn as if from a temple, while you come

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<sup>58</sup> W. refers to 520a1-2, but then this is scarcely 'soon', and Ol. sees the earlier part of the dialogue as being more directly concerned with rhetoric. See rather 463a etc. *σκόπτειν* regularly means 'criticize' rather than 'mock' is Ol.

<sup>59</sup> What is it that is supposed to be common to the temperance of these three? While Alcibiades is clearly an example of a young interlocutor 'brought to sense/made temperate' by Socrates, this is less obvious in the case of Charmides (who was widely considered to be sensible/temperate anyway, *Chrm.* 157d) and dubious in the case of Theaetetus (who was supposed to be endowed with all desirable natural qualities, *Tht.* 144ab). It would be rash, however, to suppose that Ol.'s knowledge of Plato was deficient; *sophrosyne* is here equated with self-knowledge, and the particular passages of relevance are *Alc.* 109d ff., *Chrm.* 176ab, *Tht.* 210bc.



from the temple as if from an inn'.<sup>60</sup> What is judged, then, is one's constitutional character, not where one spends one's time.

Furthermore, we should inquire why he says 'compelled'. What? Can the philosopher be compelled? We say that necessity is of two kinds, one material, the other divine. Material [necessity] is when doctors say 'it is necessary to cut your veins, for you are sick', whereas divine [necessity] is when we say 'it is necessary for God to benefit the world', i.e. inevitable. It is the latter kind of necessity that was compelling Socrates.<sup>61</sup>

And he hunts the youth through Chaerephon, as the latter also associates with the youth, being young and familiar to them, and he brings them to Socrates.<sup>62</sup>

1.7. **'No matter, Socrates; for I'll heal'** (447 b1): Chaerephon says 'It is nothing. Having been the cause I will make amends. Gorgias is my friend and I will persuade him to give the performance again'. Observe again how Chaerephon too delivers a saying that fits him. For his 'I will also make amends' is a saying that comes from the story of Telephos and Achilles, who wounded him and also healed him; here it is said 'The wounder will also be the healer'.<sup>63</sup> So Chaerephon introduces a saying about a problem being cured, because he occupies, as I said (0.8), an intermediate position. That is why he does not refer to a wound (for then he would be saying something upsetting and imitating Callicles' words) but only to the healing. For it belongs to Socrates alone, and to his students, to heal the passions in the soul properly.

1.8. **'For Gorgias is a friend of mine'** (447 b2): Chaerephon says 'Gorgias is my friend and I will convince him to put his performance on again, Socrates, now if you want, or if not now, later'. This 'later' has the force of 'For others, whenever they want it', for

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<sup>60</sup> It is not clear whether this is a story from some other source, or merely an example to illustrate Ol.'s point.

<sup>61</sup> Compare Hermias *In Phdr.* 59.8-10. Proclus (apud Dam. *In Phlb.* 17) divides necessity into three, divine, material, and end-determined. This might seem to be linked with the notion of efficient, material and final causation, though final causality (the Good) is clearly relevant to divine causation also. Damascius himself had a different division, unrelated to Ol. For more on God's having the power only to do what is not good, see below, 11.2.

<sup>62</sup> This may be independent speculation on Chaerephon's role, but it may also be an allusion to the events of *Clouds* I (see too 0.3): it sounds almost as if Chaerephon is infiltrating the young on Socrates' behalf.

<sup>63</sup> Euripides' lost play *Telephus* had covered the old story of how an oracle was given to Telephus saying 'the wounder will also heal' (referring to the need to use rust from the offending spear to heal the wound).

[Socrates] did not need his performances. As to his saying 'He is my friend and I will convince him', this indicates the externally motivated character of Gorgias and how he follows everyone indiscriminately and is persuaded by them.<sup>64</sup>

1.9. **'What, Chaerephon? Does Socrates desire'** (447b4): Callicles knows that everyone with the sole exception of Socrates has heard [Gorgias], but he recognizes that he is a great authority on constitutional questions and that [Socrates] too ought to hear him. So he says 'So, Chaerephon, does he desire to listen?' And note once more that he does not say 'What? Does he wish to listen?' but 'Does he desire', since he is preoccupied with pleasures and delights in base desires.

1.10. **'Yes; that's the very thing we have come for'** (447 b6): Chaerephon occupies an intermediate position and did not say 'Yes, Socrates desires to listen'. For that would be false, since Socrates has no need to listen. Nor again does he say 'No', for he would then be insulting Gorgias openly and appearing to be there for no purpose. So he trod an intermediate path and said 'That is the thing we have come for'. This signifies an intermediate reply.

1.11. **'Whenever you want to'** (447 b7): Callicles says 'Whenever you wish, come into the house and I will make him give a performance'. From this once again Gorgias' external motivation is evident. For Callicles talks about him, as if this was the reason why he was entertaining him in his house: so that whenever he wishes he can make him put on a performance.

1.12. **'But would he be willing'** (447 b9): 'Will he wish to converse with us? There is no need for compulsion, but if he so chooses, then so be it'. 'Converse with' is well said, for he does not want him to give a performance, but to enter a dialogue, that is, to reveal what he has to say by question and answer. For extended speech produces annoyance by its length and is likely to send the lazy person to sleep, especially if he has gone sleepless.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> 'Externally motivated': at 6.1 this is a feature of the beliefs that are learnt from others rather than confirmed for oneself. Here it rather indicates the willingness to comply with the wishes of others. Cf. also the orator's dependence on the statesman's knowledge at 2.4.

<sup>65</sup> Sentiments found elsewhere in Ol. (*In Alc.* 56.25-57.4), in anon. Prol. 15.36-44 (both referring to a tale about Aeschines), and, without the same sleep-motif, in Proclus (*In Alc.* 170.5-7). Perhaps Ol. is contributing his own view that rhetoric is often boring.

1.13 ‘**For I want to learn from him**’ (447 c1): note that he did not say ‘I desire’, but ‘I want to ask him what is the man’s capacity and what it is that he professes’.

Note that *rhetoric* is of two kinds<sup>66</sup>, one kind true and scientific, the other false and [based on] experience. That which is subordinate to the statesman is scientific, that which aims at pleasure is false. Let me explain what I mean. Note that there are many kinds of constitution. For the soul has three parts, reason, drive,<sup>67</sup> and desire. When reason holds sway it leads to aristocracy, when drive holds sway it leads to timocracy. Desire, however, is of two kinds, one kind pleasure-loving, the other money-loving. The love of money leads to oligarchy, for in an oligarchy the wealthy and the few [are in power]. If love of pleasure holds sway, it is either lawful or unlawful. If lawful [love of pleasure] holds sway, it leads to a democracy. For each of the citizens lays down the laws that he wants, for example, that leading citizens ought to be honoured, or something else like that. But if unlawful [love of pleasure] holds sway, it leads to tyranny. These are the five kinds of constitutions. Or rather, the first kind, aristocracy, is truly ‘constitutional’, and the rest are falsely so-called and not proper kinds of constitutional craft.

Note that each of these kinds has its own rhetoric, and so there are *five rhetorics*. The true rhetoric is that of aristocracy, over which the statesman presides. For in that case the rhetor serves the statesman by way recommending whatever he commands, for example, ‘Persuade them that there should be a doctor in the city’, ‘Persuade that there should not be comedy’. And just as a doctor looks to a single end, healing all who suffer, making use of a variety and not the same kind of remedies, so too the rhetor should persuade by every means, using different arguments, one kind for the doctor, another for the military, and another for the labourer.<sup>68</sup> Such is true rhetoric, the others being falsely so-called.

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<sup>66</sup> Here (p. 13.4W) begins an important excursus on rhetoric, anticipating the detailed discussion, with more in common with a *theoria* than a *lexis*. It runs for nearly three pages to the end of 1.13, p. 16.16W. It is based largely upon *Rep.* 8-9, an illustration of the way the concepts from *Rep.* figure prominently in Ol.’s interpretation of *Grg.*

<sup>67</sup> I.e. the spirited part of the soul, or θυμοειδής.

<sup>68</sup> In discussing different tools of persuasion Ol. is reading *Grg.* in the light of *Phdr.* (271a-272b), where the analogy with the doctor is also prominent. The work features later in Ol.’s education programme.

Except that under other constitutions the failings are not the same, but some are greater, some less. For example, pleasure-loving is the worst, so the rhetoric to do with this is the worst. It is for this reason that Demosthenes also rules it out and scoffs at him who says 'what do you want, what shall I write, with what shall I please you?'<sup>69</sup> But all kinds of rhetoric that have more to do with honour-loving and saving the city in whatever manner, are as far superior as they are able to be. The rhetorical arts used by those like Demosthenes, Pericles and Themistocles were of this type. They were acting well in their overall aim of saving the city, but badly insofar as they allowed it to practise democracy without holding themselves back.<sup>70</sup>

But note that Plato does not call them 'flatterers' on this account, which is what Aristides claims<sup>71</sup>—for how can the exiled be flatterers? He calls them servants. Note that a servant is inferior to one who commands him to serve. The doctor commands, and the apothecary serves, by preparing what is needed.<sup>72</sup> Just so those like Themistocles did save the city, but in so doing it was the function of servants that they performed, whereas it belongs to the statesman to order them to save it; but they were not also statesmen, for they did not save souls. Hence they were better than Python,<sup>73</sup> Philip's rhetor, who studied with Isocrates and was admired by Demosthenes, and [better than] the other pleasure-lovers. For they did not save anything, but by flattering and doing everything with pleasure in mind resembled doctors with patients in disorder about

<sup>69</sup> Dem. 3.22; see 0.3, etc.

<sup>70</sup> *Grg.* 516eff. There may be a text problem about 'themselves', since it is more logical to suppose that they should have been holding the city back. Lenz (1946) emends accordingly.

<sup>71</sup> In *For the Four*, speech 46 Dindorf = 3 Behr: Aristides was an accomplished writer of speeches from the second century A.D., and two important orations survive in which he criticizes *Grg.* for its view of rhetoric and its treatment of these four prominent political men. Lenz (1946) 125 says of this passage 'I am very doubtful whether Olympiodorus remembered any particular passage of Ἰπ. τῶν δ' at all, because Aristides discusses the problems of κολακεία, διακονία and θεραπεία throughout the whole discourse.' Obviously Ol. considers Aristides' influence sufficient to require careful defence of Plato at various points of his commentary: see intro. p. 22 and lecture 32.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. 2.4, 32.3-4, 42.1. Sometimes the distinction between doctor and apothecary is related to Plato's distinction in *Laws* 4 720a between doctor and servant doctor, but Ol. has had to alter it somewhat in the light of the medical practices of his own day.

<sup>73</sup> On Python W. compares anon. *V.Isoc.* 105-6 and Dem. 7.20-23.

their diet, who do not restrain them, but on the contrary encourage them to consume many niceties so that they too can eat with them.<sup>74</sup> Themistocles' type [of rhetor], however, resembled doctors with patients on a strict diet, who do not abandon them when they break it, nor even turn a blind eye, but take a stand against each deviation from their prescription.

I have offered these remarks because we were told of the need to learn from Gorgias what kind of rhetoric he professed and the capacity of his craft, whether he really had a craft or only a capacity, for craft and capacity are not the same. It is popular rhetoric of course which they define as a capacity for a potentially persuasive argument concerning each given thing.<sup>75</sup>

1.14. **'He professes<sup>76</sup> and teaches'** (447 c2-3): 'professes' concerns the inward aspect and 'teaches' the outward one. For the teacher offers his words externally, whereas the professional presumably knows what he professes, but he does not necessarily teach it.

## Lecture 2<sup>77</sup> (447c5-448c3)

2.1. **'There's nothing like asking the man himself, Socrates'** (447c5): we have already said [1.13] that rhetoric is of two kinds, one kind a craft, the other experience. It is worth inquiring why experience is not craft. For Plato himself will also say 'I do not call it a craft'.

In order to discover this, we divide the crafts. In the *Phaedrus*, it is well said that it is necessary for someone who is discoursing on a topic to distinguish his subject-matter first and only then to make a statement.<sup>78</sup> For if you do not proceed thus you necessarily miss

<sup>74</sup> A bizarre example, possibly Ol.'s own, though appearing in an Ammonian context at 32.2. Medical analogies are of course invited by *Grg.*

<sup>75</sup> An interesting variant on Aristotle's definition at *Rhet.* 1355b26-7.

<sup>76</sup> Irwin's 'advertizes' is clearly unsuited to the comment which follows, as Ol. understands ἐπαγγέλλεται differently.

<sup>77</sup> Lecture 2 introduces the distinction between a craft and a knack based on experience, and applies it to rhetoric. Definitions of craft are marshalled for this purpose. Ol. discusses how the orator falls short of the statesman in the knowledge of causes. The *lexis* introduces basic material from the *Categories*, recalling elementary Aristotelian logic already encountered by the student, and pays attention to matters of character and background information.

<sup>78</sup> W. cites *Phdr.* 237bc, a popular passage since the days of Cicero (*Fin.* 2.4) or Albinus (*Prol.* 1). However, as division is also relevant, it is likely that Ol. also has in mind 270a-272a, where it is required of rhetoric, as of medicine, that it should be able to distinguish, by division, all parts of that on which it

the total picture. For example, we ask: is the soul immortal? We ought not to declare an answer until we have first drawn a distinction, and said that the soul is not one thing but many. For soul is both rational and irrational, and besides this there is vegetative soul, whence we say plants are alive. Therefore we say the rational soul is immortal, but the other two are mortal. Further we say the rational soul is both immortal and not immortal: not immortal, if we take 'immortal' in the sense of 'always in the same condition', but immortal in the sense of 'everlasting' both in substance and in actuality.<sup>79</sup>

2.2. So we should also seek to do this in inquiring into crafts. Note that there are alternative definitions of craft. For a craft is 'a method proceeding with system and order together with mental impressions'.<sup>80</sup> The philosopher adds 'with mental impressions' in contrast to nature, for nature also proceeds with method and order but not together with mental impressions. Further, a craft is a 'systematic set of cognitive acts co-ordinated with a view to some useful goal in life'.<sup>81</sup> According to the first definition even falsely-named rhetoric would be a craft, for it employs system and order, putting introductions first and then establishment of the case and so on. Yet according to the second definition this type is not a craft, but only the true rhetoric—the one that supplies *causes*.

2.3. But why am I saying that according to the first definition falsely so-called rhetoric is a craft? In that case fine cookery and cosmetics would be too. Not anyone is a cook, but [only] the man who is experienced and proceeds with a certain system and learns to adapt to the tastes of his master—for sweet things or whatever. So too a cosmetician knows oils and knows how to adorn hair. So though rhetoric that can't supply causes but alternates between truth and falsehood is not a craft (for it is the mark of a craft to exist for a single good end), true rhetoric, [the kind] subordinate to the statesman, is a craft. For just as a rationalist doctor knows that wet

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operates, 270d.

<sup>79</sup> The extent to which soul is immortal is a standard *topos* of late Neoplatonism, see Dam. *In Phd.* 1.177 (p.124.13-18 Norvin). Ol. sides with Porphyry and Proclus against Iamblichus, Plutarch of Athens and the Old Academy. On that passage see Westerink's notes (1977), pp. 106-8.

<sup>80</sup> With *παντασία*, cf. 12.1, where the 'philosopher' turns out to be Chrysippus. See further Mansfeld (1983).

<sup>81</sup> Zeno, SVF 1. 73, including Ol. *In Grg.* 12.1: a craft looks towards some goal that is useful from the human point of view; nature has her own goals.

diets help people with fevers, so too do the empirical doctors. And just as the rationalist doctor knows that the eye-sufferer needs to drink wine neat or needs washing or a vapour-bath, so too does the the empirical doctor. But the rationalist and craftsmanlike doctor also supplies causes, whereas the empirical doctor does not know them.<sup>82</sup> So too the true orator knows causes, and the false orator does not.

2.4. So if both the true orator and the statesman know causes, what distinguishes them? We say that they differ, in so far as the orator needs the help of the statesman, since he does not have insight within him.<sup>83</sup> For the statesman knows with certainty and instructs him. Further, if someone asks 'What distinguishes a craft from knowledge, if a craft also supplies causes?', answer that knowledge makes judgments about what always remains in the same condition, and craft about what changes.<sup>84</sup> 'Then would the physicist not possess knowledge, bearing in mind that he inquires into things that change and are enmattered?' We say 'Yes, he does possess knowledge, not in so far as he is an inquirer into enmattered things, but in so far as he refers them to universals and inquires into the constitution of natural things on a universal scale'.<sup>85</sup>

So note that [Plato] attacks false rhetoric, not true. For instance he himself will say<sup>86</sup> 'I do not say these things about true rhetoric'. So even if those like Themistocles saved [the city], they were not true orators, since they did not lead the democracy towards aristocracy. If someone says they lacked the power to do so, he says this very thing, that they were not true [orators] and agrees with our criticism.<sup>87</sup> So they were servants, like pharmacists vis-à-vis doctors.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Our primary source for the difference between empirical and rational medicine, Galen, is also likely to be Ol.'s source. Cf. Todd (1976). See note on 12.2 above.

<sup>83</sup> The difference between orator and statesman is an important distinction for Ol. personally, perhaps relevant to his own situation—for if philosophy teaches rhetoric he would not want this to be seen as subversive. It may be that the dependence of the orator on another's knowledge contributes to the picture of Gorgias as one who is externally motivated, 1.13, 6.1.

<sup>84</sup> Standard Aristotelian doctrine, *EN* 6.3-4.

<sup>85</sup> The material here parallels David 44.23-45 and Ps-Elias 16.19.

<sup>86</sup> This looks forward to 517a.

<sup>87</sup> This notion of 'lacking power', based on the exchange with Polus, is a recurrent theme in the commentary.

<sup>88</sup> Compare 1.13, 32.3-4, 42.1. This, however, is the only time that the word *φαρμακόπωλος* as opposed to *πιμεντάριος* is used.

2.5. **'Asking the man himself'** (447c5): Callicles answers in considerate manner. In order that he should not seem to be taking a decision for another, he says it is appropriate to ask Gorgias himself whether he would be pleased to enter into conversation. For indeed this is one aspect of Gorgias' performance, his saying 'Whoever so wishes may ask questions and I am prepared to answer everything'. This was what they were discussing as they were entering Callicles' house.

2.6. **'You ask him, Chaerephon'** (447c9): as I have said (0.8), Chaerephon has an intermediate position, and for this reason [Socrates] bids Chaerephon question Gorgias.

2.7. **'Ask him what?'** (447c10): Chaerephon indicates respect for his teacher. For he does not question Gorgias impetuously, but first learns from Socrates what he should ask.

2.8. **'Who he is'** (447d1): note that man is both complex and simple.<sup>89</sup> He is simple with regard to his name, for man is called by one name, but has many parts with regard to the definition, mortal rational animal. So [Socrates] says 'Ask what he is', that is 'What he is called and what sort of rhetoric he professes'. Note that according to Aristotle<sup>90</sup> it is necessary to inquire first whether something exists, and then what it is and what sort of thing it is and why it is. So, as it is known *whether* he is [i.e. exists], 'now learn *what* he is'.

Then Chaerephon asks 'How do you mean?', that is 'How shall I ask what he is?'. So Socrates, because he has the custom of using naturally illuminating examples, says 'Just as if you had asked a maker of shoes what he was, he would have answered that he was a cobbler, so too ask this man what he is'. So Chaerephon says 'Now I understand and I shall ask'.

As a result we are given an ethical lesson that contributes to our well-being. What is it? 'Don't trust reports, but rather ask the man himself who is the subject of the discussion'. For example, if ten thousand people said that this fellow maintains that twice two is a

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<sup>89</sup> The reasoning here seems not to have been fully spelled out by the note-taker. Though Gorgias might simply have answered that he was a man, the question asks for the kind of man he is. The introduction here of the standard definition of man merely establishes, like *Phlb.* 14c-15c, that the unity 'man' can be divided, so that it is quite legitimate for the question to be asking 'what sort of man?'.  
<sup>90</sup> *An.Po.* 2.1, cf. 3.1.



hundred, let us not believe the multitude but rather let us question him. For it is likely to be false. So [Socrates] is saying 'So now too let us not trust Callicles, but ask the man himself'.

2.9. **'Tell me, Gorgias, is what Callicles here says true'** (447d6-7): [Chaerephon] asked 'Is he speaking the truth?', wishing to make Gorgias feel shame, that they should make so many boastful claims about him. But Gorgias was not ashamed, but exacerbates this passion.<sup>91</sup> For he says 'Yes, he speaks the truth, I respond to all questions and there is nothing new I could be asked'. He says this out of arrogance towards people, as if to say 'I have been asked all things and I have resolved all things, and there is nothing new I can be asked'.

2.10. **'Then no doubt you'll find it easy to answer, Gorgias'** (448a4): [Chaerephon] says 'Will you answer easily, Gorgias?', and Gorgias says 'You have a chance to test this'. Polus, like an ambitious person, pushes ahead of his own teacher and says 'Look here, I will converse with you if you like.' Note that he is not likely to be saying this out of rivalry and disrespect for his own teacher; but, because Socrates is the leader of philosophical teaching and Chaerephon the follower, and Gorgias is the leader of rhetorical teaching and Polus the follower, he is saying 'As a follower, do not converse with the leader but with me his follower'.

Note that, in the presence of their teachers, students ought to answer when their teachers so instruct them and when their teachers do not have knowledge ready to hand, but the students do. Observe too that Socrates made Chaerephon ask, not because he didn't deign to ask in person—that would be foolish—but [because] he wanted to make an orderly display of his entire teaching-method, and because he sought to discover if his students had been able to discover anything worthwhile.<sup>92</sup>

2.11. **'For I think Gorgias'** (448a7): 'For Gorgias seems to me to be weary for a discussion with you'.

2.12. **'What, Polus?'** (448a9): 'Why, Polus', says Chaerephon, 'will you answer better than your teacher?'. Polus does not say yes,

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<sup>91</sup> Here 'passion' renders the difficult Greek word *πάθος* (*pathos*), implying some fault connected with one's character, here pride.

<sup>92</sup> Ol. is extremely concerned about the etiquette governing the precedence of teachers and students (and parents and children). For him Socrates is the model of the wise teacher and Chaerephon the respectful pupil, with Polus' relation to Gorgias a negative exemplar. Cf. 34.3 on Socratic ignorance.

for that would cause [Gorgias] offence, nor does he say no, for he is unwilling to quell his ambition, but instead he gives an intermediate answer. For he says 'Why seek whether I answer better or worse, as long as my answers are sufficient for you and meet all your demands?'

2.13. **'If Gorgias happened to have knowledge of the same craft as his brother Herodicus'** (448b4-5): [Chaerephon] begins his questions. Note that Plato knows two Herodicuses, one from Leontini, the brother of Gorgias, and the other Herodicus the Selymbrian.<sup>93</sup> When you find them in the dialogues, do not get confused in the belief that there is only one. Here he is speaking about the Leontinian. He says 'If Gorgias were an expert in the craft of Herodicus his brother—which is medicine, for he was a doctor—what would we call him? Wouldn't we call him what he was—that is, a doctor?'. Polus says 'That is right'. 'So, calling him a doctor,' Chaerephon says, 'we would be speaking correctly?'. Polus says 'Yes'. Again Chaerephon says 'If Gorgias were experienced in the craft of the son of Aglaophon, I mean Aristophon, or his brother, I mean Polygnotus'—for Polygnotus was his brother, as the epigram shows,<sup>94</sup> so wherever you find the brother of Aristophon, think of Polygnotus—'wouldn't we have called him a painter?' Polus says 'A painter, certainly'. 'Now then, in what craft is Gorgias an expert, what would we be right to call him?' Note that he chose these two examples, medicine and painting, appropriately, since rhetoric is of two kinds. His purpose is to liken true rhetoric to medicine, and the false and swinelike rhetoric to painting.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> The Selymbrian is mentioned at *Prot.* 316de as an expert on gymnastics; see also *Rep.* 406a.

<sup>94</sup> Simonides fr. 112 Diehl, XLVIII Campbell (= *Anth.Pal.* 9.700, Paus. 10.27.4).

<sup>95</sup> It is natural for a Platonist like Ol. to suppose that painting would turn out to be an empirical knack and a flattery rather than a craft in the terms of *Grg.*, in view of Plato's low evaluation (cf. *Rep.* 10, *Phlb.* 51c). This is another instance of Ol.'s standard practice of using doctrines of other, later dialogues (especially *Rep.*) to interpret *Grg.*

**Lecture 3** <sup>96</sup> (448c4-9c9)

3.1. ‘There are many crafts among men, Chaerephon’ (448c4): Polus answers like a young man. For although Chaerephon encouraged him to reply in a dialectical manner, in fact he delivers his speech in theatrical fashion. Not only this: his response to the question is also beside the point, for which Socrates particularly takes him to task. For although Chaerephon asked him what was the craft that he professed, in his reply he said what kind of thing the craft was, in ignorance of the order of the four ‘problems’ and the procedure concerning them.<sup>97</sup>

Note, as has often been said, that there are four procedures:<sup>98</sup> first, *division*, for we must first divide the genera into species and proceed until we reach indivisible parts. In this way we divide substance in an orderly fashion.<sup>99</sup> Second comes *definition*, which takes the terms that fit a given thing and applies its own definition to it. Hence it is called definition, a metaphorical sense deriving from the boundary markers that mark the limits of cities and places. *Demonstration* then takes over the definition, and proceeds to demonstrate by means of the common notions. *Analysis* proceeds from the complex to the simple. For instance, we ask ‘Is the argument that asserts “Socrates walks, everything that walks moves, therefore Socrates moves” complex or simple?’ We answer it is complex. For it is composed of premises, and the premises consist of nouns and predicates, and the nouns and predicates are themselves complex (formed from syllables), and these too are complex (formed from letters), and the letters are simple.

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<sup>96</sup> Lecture 3 introduces a basically Aristotelian logical classification of division, definition, demonstration and analysis. Ol. then applies the distinctions between division and demonstration and between accident and essence to Polus’ inadequate answer to Socrates’ question. Ol. also introduces an epistemological classification, again with an Aristotelian origin, of sensation, memory, acquaintance, experience and craft. This gives rise to a discussion of Platonic recollection, emphasizing that the latent knowledge postulated by that theory is more important in the transitions from the lower cognitive states to the higher than the lower cognitive state itself; the latter merely acts as the trigger.

<sup>97</sup> See above, 2.8; the theory is Aristotelian, *An.Po.* 2.1.

<sup>98</sup> This passage has parallels in much of late Neoplatonism: Syrianus (*In Met.* 55.38ff.), Proclus (often), Ammonius (*In Isag.* 34.15ff., *In An.Pr.* 8.4-9), Damascius (*In Phlb.* 52-56), Elias (*In Isag.* 37.9ff.), David (88.3ff.), Ps.-El. (26.4-31).

<sup>99</sup> *Phlb.* 16c-e is the Platonic text of immediate relevance.

3.2. I say these things in order to show that Polus has employed demonstration instead of definition. For when asked *what* Gorgias' craft is, a question that asks for a definition, he answers with the *kind of thing* it is, which belongs to demonstration. So [Socrates] criticizes him on this account, especially since he had employed balanced parallel clauses and words with rhyming elements. For although they assume that these things are stylish, like 'On the pausing of Pausanias'<sup>100</sup> and so on, they become tedious if used to excess. That is the way [Polus] also uses terminology. For he talks of 'experience' and 'inexperience', and 'skillwise' and 'luckwise' and again 'different [people] participate in different [ones] differently'<sup>101</sup>—these are instances of rhyming<sup>102</sup> elements.

Note also, as Socrates suggests,<sup>103</sup> that while he produces these phrases as if by improvization, in reality he has prepared them, and has committed them to paper, and practised them. Note also that Polus hasn't even given a sound description of *what kind of thing* [rhetoric] is. He should have stated its essence, but he himself grasped only an accidental property, because he was praising rhetoric. So he gave a speech in praise of it instead of searching for its essence.

He made a further mistake in saying 'experience leads human life' (he means our time)<sup>104</sup> 'to advance skillwise, inexperience luckwise.' This was not a good claim. For note that there are these five things, sensation, memory, acquaintance, experience, craft.<sup>105</sup> *Sensation* gives us a basic impression of everything, next *memory* grasps it, then hands it over for *acquaintance*, from which we

<sup>100</sup> See *Symp.* 185c. Ol.'s familiarity with grammatical theory can be assumed.

<sup>101</sup> ἐμπειρία, ἀπειρία, κατὰ τέχνην, κατὰ τύχην, ἄλλοι ἄλλων ἄλλως.

<sup>102</sup> *homoiokatalekta* are strictly speaking words with similar endings, but Ol. uses the term as if it could refer to similarity in other parts of the relevant words.

<sup>103</sup> W. refers here to 462bc, which suggests a written prototype of Polus' words; 448d1 suggests preparation and practice.

<sup>104</sup> Polus used a word for 'life' (αἰών) which to Ol. suggests eternity, so he adds a note that in this case only the time of a mortal lifespan is meant.

<sup>105</sup> Aristotle has only four of these at *An.Po.* 2.18 and *Met.* A1, but the list was expanded to include *peira* (acquaintance) in late Neoplatonist times. Asclepius, *In Met.* 5.10-26, in discussing the latter passage, uses the expanded list and includes distinctions similar to those employed by Ol. In so doing he actually quotes *Grg.* twice, including Polus' allegedly mistaken words (5.14-15). This suggests strongly that the distinctions were a standard *topos* in Neoplatonic discussion of *Grg.* Related material occurs at Dav. 43.19-44.22 and Ps.-El. 16.14-21.

become *experienced*, and subsequently *craftsmen*. Experience differs from acquaintance in that experience is a term applied also to activities,<sup>106</sup> whereas acquaintance is applied to individual aspects of an area of craft.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, while it is acquaintance that arises when these are taken separately, it is experience that tackles them rather as a whole. Furthermore, it is experience which knows *that*, whereas craft knows *why*.

So it was wrong [for Polus] to say that experience creates craft, seeing that experience is inferior. For if this is so, the superior is produced from the inferior and 'springs rise up from holy rivers'.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, acquaintance does not create experience. What? Don't we proceed to experience from acquaintance and from experience to craft? We say yes. Acquaintance *contributes towards* experience and experience to craft, but they are not, however, *creative causes*. This [step forward] happens because we possess the required cognitive principles<sup>109</sup> and set them in motion. It is like someone exposing glowing embers by removing ashes which have long hidden them: he is not said to have created a fire but to have revealed it. Or it is like someone purging an eye of a sty: he makes a contribution, but does not himself create light. So too the [cognitive] powers in us have need of something to remind us, analogous as we are to a sleeping geometrician.<sup>110</sup> So experience is not a creative [cause of craft]. But although Polus does not

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<sup>106</sup> This passage seems hopelessly garbled, and offers no contrast between *peira* and *empeiria*. In Asclepius, who argues intelligibly, it is clear that (i) *peira* is to be distinguished from memory by being more 'individual', while experience is more 'universal' than memory, and likewise than *peira*. The 'individual' nature of *peira* is confirmed by David, 43.23-25 (cf. 47.18). Furthermore (ii) memory covers both substances and activities, while *peira* is used only of activities (hence 'acquaintance' may not be a strictly accurate translation). The cognitive importance of *peira* may be due to the influence of the medical sects, as can be seen from the Corpus Galenicum, where medical experience is the product of a collection of individual *peirai*, e.g. Kühn vol. I 69.2-6, vol. 17b 20.11-21.1, 873.11-15.

<sup>107</sup> Reading τεχνικῶν for W.'s τεχνιτῶν. Also the first ἡ at p. 25.5 should perhaps be deleted.

<sup>108</sup> Eur. *Med.* 410.

<sup>109</sup> *logoi*: Ol. thinks of the root cause of the Platonic *anamnesis*-process as being certain *logoi* within us.

<sup>110</sup> Ol. has in mind the 'recollection' passage of the *Meno* (81a-86c); the notion that our latent recollectable knowledge needed 'awakening' is common in later Platonism (cf. *Meno* 85c9, 86a7). Also relevant is the common Aristotelian image of a state of knowing but not using as like sleeping, and activity as like actively using that knowledge. Aristotle uses the example of the sleeping geometrician at GA 735a10.

speak with knowledge, it *is* possible for experience to bring about craft, as in farming. For some farm products occur through the [forces of the] universe alone, and others through the [forces of the] universe and also by craft. For example, pastures grow naturally through the [forces of the] universe alone, but sown crops grow both by the [forces of the] universe and by human care. Yet there too experience and care are contributing something towards craft.<sup>111</sup>

3.3. **'Various men in various ways share in various of these crafts'** (448c7-8): observe the use of matching language. He says 'Of these, various people participate in various things in various ways.' By 'various people' he means the individuals who participate, by 'various things' he means the various matters, and by 'in various ways' he means the manner of their participation. He says 'The best men participate in the best pursuits. So Gorgias too is one of these best men, and he participates in the finest and best of crafts.'

3.4. **'Well, Gorgias, Polus seems to be finely equipped'** (448d1): when Chaerephon has asked Polus what that craft is that Gorgias professes, Polus misses the point, saying 'Rhetoric is admirable', answering in a theatrical rather than a dialectical manner. So because Polus gives an undisciplined answer, Socrates, resembling that providential power which orders the disorganized and leaves nothing undisciplined or indefinite, calls him to order and criticizes him. But because criticism tends to generate considerable enmity and aversion, he does not *begin* with criticism, so that Gorgias does not run off—that's how he acted in the *Alcibiades* too —<sup>112</sup> but first he praises him and says that Polus has had a fine preparation for discourse. For he certainly advanced the discussion in rhetorical fashion with his use of matching clauses and words with rhyming parts. And Socrates even mixes the language of compromise into his very criticism. For he does not say that Polus' response to Chaerephon was beside the point, but that he did not do what he had undertaken. And in this case he offers us two ethical lessons and one dialectical one. The dialectical lesson is that we

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<sup>111</sup> Ol. presumably means that *experience* of nature's growth-processes promote the ability to duplicate them artificially by *craft*. But only in some cases is it possible for craft to arise from our experience, since some processes of which we can have experience can never be imitated by craft.

<sup>112</sup> The reference is apparently to the beginning of *Alc.*; W. refers to 103b-4c: see Ol. *In Alc.* 29-30.

should always tailor our answers to the questions. The ethical lessons are that we should keep our promise and not become a liar, and that we should strive to associate with respectful rather than disrespectful persons. That is surely why Socrates directs his argument towards Gorgias, ignoring Polus and his lack of respect.

3.5. **‘What is called the rhetorical craft’** (448d9): he refers to what is not rightly so called, i.e. to experience.

3.6. **‘Why is that, Socrates?’** (448e1): Polus says this.<sup>113</sup>

3.7. **‘Because Chaerephon asked you, Polus’** (448e2): ‘I am saying this, Polus, because when Chaerephon asked you what the craft was that Gorgias professes, you said what kind of thing it was, praising it as if someone were criticizing it. Observe how Plato was able to distinguish the ‘problems’ even before Aristotle!’<sup>114</sup>

3.8. **‘But didn’t I answer’** (448e5) ‘What? Did I not say it was a fine thing?’ Socrates says ‘Very much so. But you shouldn’t respond like that, saying what kind of thing it is. You must say what it is, and what<sup>115</sup> we should call Gorgias. Just as you earlier gave a brief answer to Chaerephon, saying that Herodicus is called a healer from the healing craft, and the painter is so called from painting, that is how you should answer now too, saying what Gorgias’ craft is.’

3.9. **‘The rhetorical craft, Socrates’** (449a5): Gorgias answered well. For he said ‘I have an understanding of the rhetorical craft’. ‘Then an orator’, Socrates says, ‘is what we should call you?’ Gorgias says ‘Yes, and a good orator. For I claim to be good, as Homer<sup>116</sup> says.’ Note that there are two kinds of rhetoric.<sup>117</sup> Each has a separate genus, a separate goal and a separate approach. The genus of true rhetoric is craft, that of false rhetoric is experience. Further, the goal of true rhetoric is the good, of the other it is persuasion, regardless of whether that is bad or not. Moreover,

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<sup>113</sup> The first passage where Ol. takes it as his task to say whose who is speaking, whether because his text had no indication of speakers, or whether such indications could not be trusted. See also 12.8, and less obviously 23.11, 34.14.

<sup>114</sup> These are the methodologies of 3.1. Ol. characteristically regards Plato as having developed and allegorically expressed doctrines that are not formally expounded until Aristotle, cf. 22.3, 31.8, 43.8.

<sup>115</sup> Reading ὅτινα for οἷόν τινα to conform with *Gr.* 447d1 and 2.8.

<sup>116</sup> *Il.* 14.113, 23.669.

<sup>117</sup> The dichotomy of rhetoric remains basic (see 1.13, 2.2) in spite of the various elaborations needed to afford famous Athenian leaders an intermediate position (see Intro. 18 and 1.13).

knowing the faculties of the soul is characteristic of the approach of the true kind, not of the other. Belief through teaching is characteristic of the approach of the true kind, belief through persuasion is characteristic of the other. (The geometer also wishes to persuade, but demonstratively and not persuasively like the orator.)<sup>118</sup>

Just as medicine professes [to produce] health, but by a whole variety of resources, so too the [different kinds of] rhetoric proceed through a whole variety of approaches. Hence we must realize that just as a sword is in itself neither good nor bad, but is good or bad relative to the person who uses it, so too rhetoric in itself is not good, but becomes good relative to the person who uses it.<sup>119</sup> Gorgias knows this and says 'I am a good orator', i.e. 'I have used [rhetoric] as it should be used'.<sup>120</sup>

3.10. 'And aren't we to say that you are capable of making other people orators too?' (449b1) 'Surely', Socrates says, 'you are also able to make others like yourself?' He establishes this as a preliminary, since he is going to require it for his demonstration that injustice is a bad thing and justice a fine one, and that while injustice is a matter of convention, justice exists in nature.<sup>121</sup> For if justice was conventional, the same person would be both just and unjust and both loved and hated by the gods.<sup>122</sup> For the just man for the Persians, who tells you to have intercourse with your mothers, is unjust in our sight, and a man who is just for us is unjust for them. So it is not a matter of convention but of nature, as has been more fully stated in the *Alcibiades*.<sup>123</sup> For the man who says injustice is a fine thing and justice a bad one resembles, as Plato says in the *Phaedrus* (260a-d), the man who says that the horse shows its credentials when it has the task of an ass and an ass [when it] has the task of a horse.<sup>124</sup> Such a man will use the horse instead of an

<sup>118</sup> This comment on how there can be two kinds of persuasion is either a gloss or the result of recorder simplification, since it reduces all oratory to the status of false oratory.

<sup>119</sup> Platonic (or Socratic?) doctrine, see *Meno* 87e-89a, *Euthd.* 280b-281e.

<sup>120</sup> This odd reading of Gorgias' claim colours the interpretation of 'like yourself' in 3.10.

<sup>121</sup> At first hearing this sounds strange: one would expect what is just and what is unjust to be determined on the same basis—both by convention or both by nature. But nevertheless this is regular doctrine, see later, 9.3, 28.3, 46.7.

<sup>122</sup> Relevant here is Plato's *Euthphr.* 7a-11b, especially 7e-8b.

<sup>123</sup> See *Ol. In Alc.* 91.9-13; *Proc. In Alc.* 259.19-260.9.

<sup>124</sup> The text may be at fault at this point. We add ἐπὶ after ὄνος at p. 28.30.



ass and the ass instead of the horse, and will charge out to battle on an ass as if it were a horse and come to great harm.

And it was a fine inference when he said 'Surely you are able to make others [skilled orators] too?', because this is one of the things that characterize the man with understanding, that he is able to make others understand as well, as has also been stated in the *Alcibiades*.<sup>125</sup>

3.11. **'Asking one question, answering another'** (449b5): some questions are dialectical, requiring only yes or no for an answer, while some are inquisitive, requiring long explanations for an answer. [Socrates] therefore says 'Carry on like that, Gorgias, conversing by question and answer.' This is admirable, for the loser becomes his own accuser. For in the case of extended arguments he claims 'It was not I who said this; you drew the inference.'<sup>126</sup>

3.12. **'Some answers require long speeches, Socrates'** (449b9): Gorgias says 'There are some questions that actually need a long explanation, but even in these cases I conduct the argument in the briefest way possible, such is the glory of my skill'. For indeed it is admirable to embrace much meaning within a few words.

3.13. **'Well, that's what is needed, Gorgias'** (449c4): there are times when we even exploit our passions for a good purpose.<sup>127</sup> For example, someone says pleasure is a fine thing, and we reply 'Yes, a fine thing, but let's investigate *what sort* of pleasure. It is not base pleasure, but the sort that has God in view.'<sup>128</sup> Again, someone is ambitious: we say 'Ambition is a fine thing, but ambition related to the soul, not to the body. So we should strive to be honoured'<sup>129</sup> by a few men of serious [character] rather than by a great number of

<sup>125</sup> *Alc.* 118cd; *Ol. In Alc.* 138.16-139.4.

<sup>126</sup> *Ol.* perhaps has no special passage in mind. *Euthphr.* 11c1-5 (cf. 15b) would be an example. There is no obvious *Grg.* passage, and Socrates is more likely to be found making the investigation a cooperative effort (cf. 10.9 on 461a). It is where the argument has been long and complicated that the interlocutor must be reminded that he drew the required inference at every step.

<sup>127</sup> See 6.13 below. As 'passions' translates *πάθη*, this amounts to the doctrine that human 'failings' can be successfully utilized.

<sup>128</sup> The Greek suggests the pleasure of contemplating or imitating or following god, but a number of passages in *In Alc.* (42.12-15, 146.10-11, cf. 7.7-8, 55.10-11), to which W. refers, make it clear that *Ol.* regards true pleasure as something *belonging to* god(s), from which the pleasure-lover has a notion of pleasure as something to be pursued. The theory is present already at *Proc. In Alc.* 152.5-6, 12-15.

<sup>129</sup> Reading *τιμᾶσθαι* for *φιλεῖσθαι* as suggested by W.

disorderly persons.' So here too, although it is a passion of Gorgias' to praise himself and say 'I answer most briefly', Socrates accepts this, and says 'Give me a demonstration of this, for you will do me a favour by answering in a few words.'

3.14. 'All right, I'll do it' (449c7): 'I'll be sparing with my words, so sparing that you'll say that you've never heard anyone like me'.

#### Lecture 4<sup>130</sup> (449 c9-451 d6)

4.1. 'Come, then. You say you have knowledge of the oratorical craft' (449 c9): Gorgias has declared with clarity 'I profess [the craft of] rhetoric'. So Socrates asks about that activity. For just as it is [the task] of medicine to make people healthy, of music to produce melodic sounds, and of building to build, so too [the task] of rhetoric is to persuade. Socrates wants Gorgias to tell him this so that then the principle of constitutional well-being can be discovered. For, as I have said (0.4), the purpose of the dialogue is to teach the ethical principles that lead to constitutional well-being. Gorgias' reply, that speeches are the activity of rhetoric, misses the point.

To understand what is being said let us first grasp the following: some crafts differ in the *stuffs* they employ, such as building and bronzesmithing. Others differ only in their *end*, such as ship-building and bed-making (timber is the stuff of both, but their end is different). Others differ in their *means*, such as trawling and angling—both hunt fish, but the means is different, in one case by net and in the other by hook.<sup>131</sup>

4.2. Socrates is inquiring here about the stuff of rhetoric (such as the just and the beneficial, for example). And also about what is creative of [rhetoric], and what it aims at—such as persuading, and whether to persuade for good or for bad—and its manner of

<sup>130</sup> In lecture 4 Ol. discusses Socrates' request to Gorgias to define his craft of rhetoric, and the flaws in Gorgias' response, that rhetoric is the craft that deals with speech. Using a distinction between materials, means and ends Ol. explicates Socrates' question as dealing with the materials (and activity) of rhetoric, e.g. the just and beneficial. Gorgias' answer, speech, states merely the instruments of rhetoric, and is both too narrow (rhetoric also employs silence) and too broad (there are other forms of speech besides the rhetorical). A reference to a goddess gives Ol. the opportunity to expound on the nature of the gods, and he also enlarges upon the various kinds of crafts there are.

<sup>131</sup> The distinction derives from Plato's *Sophist*, 220b-221a.

operation, and whether it knows what is just and what is unjust. For a man who does not know this does himself harm, choosing the unjust as if it were just.

Asked for the activity, then, Gorgias does not supply it. For he says rhetoric has to do with speech. Now there are two ways of tackling Gorgias: first, showing that he supplies the instruments, not the activity of rhetoric—speeches are the instruments of rhetoric. Second, showing that he does not refer to what is *specific* to rhetoric—the proper task of definition. For just as manufacturing cloth is specific to weaving, and being concerned with melodies is specific to music, so in the case of rhetoric we need to say something specific. For a concern with speech belongs to both grammar and medicine. Note, however, that [Socrates] does not level both of these criticisms, only that he did not respond specifically; he omits the fact that [Gorgias] stated the instrument [of rhetoric] rather than its task, either because it was obscure and he dropped it for this reason, or because Gorgias tackles himself on this point,<sup>132</sup> or, more to the point, so as not to strike him too many blows.

It is worth inquiring how Gorgias forms the impression that making speeches is the stuff of rhetoric. We say that it is because rhetoric has a special concern with with speech-making, inquiring into the order of introduction, establishing one's case, disputations, and such like. He ought to say not simply speech, but speech of a certain sort. For note that [rhetoric] persuades not only by speech but also by silence, and so silence too is one of its materials. It certainly says 'About these matters I remain silent, for what need is there to say anything?'.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, one of the materials of rhetoric is *acting* which seduces one into believing, as in 'Androton, O earth and gods!'.<sup>134</sup> Hence, there is more than speech that is the stuff [of rhetoric].

4.3. 'By Hera' (449 d5): true to his promises, [Gorgias] spoke briefly (for 'Yes' is all he said). So Socrates praises him with an oath, because oaths are accustomed to persuade people and to encourage them to continue on the same terms.

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<sup>132</sup> A reference to 450b where Gorgias asserts that all the *πᾶσις* of rhetoric takes place through (*διὰ*) speeches.

<sup>133</sup> Ol. is referring to the rhetorical device known as *praeteritio*, bringing something to the audience's attention by saying that you will pass it by. W. refers to Dem. 25.79.

<sup>134</sup> Dem. 22.78. It is entirely possible that the lecturer did put on an act while delivering these words.

Note that Hera is the pure air and in short the rational soul, which leaves the lowly and earthy nature of the non-rational soul below, and ascends in purity.<sup>135</sup> He swears by her because he is excising irrational passions and seeking to encourage<sup>136</sup> the rational and intellectual soul, and furthermore because the discussion is about rational matters.<sup>137</sup> So we should not understand things spoken in mythical mode in their surface meaning.<sup>138</sup>

For we also know that there is the one first cause, namely God, and not many first [causes].<sup>139</sup> And this first [cause] does not have a name, for names signify certain particularities. If then there is no particularity belonging to God (for he is above particularity), neither will there be a name by which he can be spoken of. That is surely what the hymn to God means:

O all-transcendent—for how greater else can I hymn you?  
How shall I praise you, you who exceed in all things?  
What account will celebrate you who are not even graspable by  
intellect?<sup>140</sup>

Nor is it possible to refer to him as male or female, for they are correlative terms. For we speak of the male in relation to the female and of the female in relation to the male, but at that level there is

<sup>135</sup> Hera is interpreted as pure air in Plato (*Crat.* 404c), while Theodorus of Asine links her also with the intellectual part of soul as here, *Proc. In Tim.* 3.190.10-19. For other signifiers of the rational soul in this commentary see 25.10 (the dog), 30.1-2 (the sieve), 48.6 (Prometheus' fire).

<sup>136</sup> An odd translation for χαρίζεσθαι; an alternative would be to emend to χωρίζεσθαι (as Taylor, 1937), and translate 'separate'.

<sup>137</sup> Or 'about speeches': Ol. makes use of the close etymological and theoretical connexion between *logikos* (rational) and *logos* (speech).

<sup>138</sup> This anticipates later discussion of allegorical interpretation of myths, particularly lecture 46.

<sup>139</sup> On the transcendence and namelessness of god see also 47.2 below. The impossibility or severe difficulty of speaking about or naming god is already present in Middle Platonist times, e.g. Apul. *De Plat.* 1.5 (*indictum, innominabilem*), Alc. *Didasc.* 10, Philo Alex. *Somn.* 63, and continues into e.g. Iamblichus and Proclus (*In Tim.* 1.24.18, 312.27). The 'we also' may be suggesting that Platonists agree with Christians on this issue, Westerink (1990) xxii.

<sup>140</sup> From a hymn, recently assumed to come from Proclus, e.g. Rosán (1949) 53ff., but appearing in manuscripts of Gregory of Nazianze and Ps.-Dionysius; the latter is credited with the authorship by Sicherl (1988). It is unfortunate that neither Ol. nor Asclepius sees fit to help us with this question, and Ol. seems indifferent each time the hymn is used (0.6, 4.3, 16.1, 47.2). Sicherl, however, affirms that 'dass sie wussten, von wem der Hymnus stammt, scheiner τις und besonders ἐκεῖνος anzudeuten.' The present quotation is used again (with first line omitted) at 47.2.

nothing that is correlative with him. Hence, since it is absurd to say that the divine comes directly after us, we say there are other powers, some near to us, others more distant. When the poet speaks of Hera's feet being bound to an anvil, he signifies the heaviest two elements, but her hands hanging in the bright sky signify the eternal motion, seeing that hands are causes of motion. Hence we understand myths according to their inner meaning.

And do not believe that procreation occurs there. For if they beget children, how will they 'forever exist'? For begetting belongs to those in their prime, and where there is a prime, there is also a decline, and so you would also find corruption there.<sup>141</sup> So there is nothing bodily there, as Empedocles<sup>142</sup> also says, before Plato. For he says 'There was no human head fixed upon the limbs' and so on.

4.4. So Socrates says to Gorgias: 'Tell me what rhetoric you profess and what is the stuff of rhetoric, so that we can find out whether you represent true rhetoric'. The materials of court-room [rhetoric] are justice and advantage, of public-address [rhetoric] the fine and the base, of advisory [rhetoric] the good and the bad—for encouragement and discouragement belong to advising, the good being the object of encouragement, the bad of discouragement. So to Socrates' question 'Of which of the things that are is rhetoric knowledge?', Gorgias answers 'speech'. And, as I have already said, the answer is to be criticized on two grounds. Because Socrates did not want to embarrass Gorgias but to benefit him, however, he says 'Since medicine is also concerned with speech about those who are ill, and many other [crafts similarly], state precisely what sort of speech you are concerned with'.

4.5. **'But still it makes men powerful at speaking'** (449e4-5): He is saying 'Does it also possess the power of teaching others to speak?

4.6. **'And at understanding the things they speak about?'** (449e5): He says 'Well, Gorgias, does it lead to knowledge of those subjects concerning which it professes to speak and to understand? If so, and if we also see medicine professing to speak and understand

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<sup>141</sup> The same argument occurs at 47.1.

<sup>142</sup> Emp. B134DK, known primarily from Amm. *In De Int.* 249.1-25, who thinks of the fragment as an attack on the anthropomorphic concept of gods in myth. It may suit Ol. to represent Socrates & Plato as following a tradition already established in their scepticism of traditional theology. The original meaning of Empedocles, the fragment's place is his poem(s), and the significance of the 'holy mind' to which it refers, is much disputed.

about the sick, medicine too will be concerned with speech, and not only rhetoric'.

4.7. '**And isn't gymnastics too**' (450a5): He is not talking about our present physical trainers but about the ancients. For it was medicine that restored absent health, while gymnastic training preserved health that was present. But nowadays the distinction is blurred.<sup>143</sup>

4.8. '**Because, Socrates**' (450b6): Gorgias says 'The reason I do not call the other crafts rhetoric is that they also involve hands-on activities (i.e. operations), whereas rhetoric is the only one to deal with speech exclusively'. He is mistaken, however. For, as I have said, rhetoric is not concerned with speech alone, but also with silence and with acting. So Socrates properly clarifies the argument and renders all the crafts in accordance with the following division:

Crafts :

- 1. dealing with works alone, e.g. painting and sculpture
- 2. dealing with speech, e.g. dialectic
- 3. dealing with both speech and works, e.g. medicine, geometry, arithmetic
  - 3a. dealing more with works and less with speech, e.g. medicine
  - 3b. dealing more with speech and less with works, e.g. arithmetic, geometry, and calculation
  - 3c. dealing equally [with works and speech], e.g. petteutics.<sup>144</sup>

So painting, sculpture and the like deal with works alone, dialectic with speech alone, medicine, geometry, arithmetic and calculation with both speech and works. But medicine deals more with works and less with speech, arithmetic, geometry, and arithmetic

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<sup>143</sup> Ol. explains a distinction which would not be obvious to his contemporaries owing to supposed developments in medical practice.

<sup>144</sup> It is hazardous to translate this word. Firstly, there is no agreement as to what it means at *Grg.* 450d8, on which see Carbonara Naddei (1976) 141-2, quoted extensively by Pieri (1991). Secondly it appears to mean something different to Ol. anyway, and though Carbonara Naddei is treating scholia closely related to our present text, she does not discuss what it meant for Ol. and his fellow Alexandrian Platonists. Ol. describes something more akin to 'knucklebones' (Gk. *astragaloi*, Lat. *tali*) which used differences of a side's shape rather than numerical marks to determine number and utilized only the longer sides, the two ends being rounded off. The 'calling' as one throws would be more appropriate to dice, particularly as knucklebones lacked a 'five'.

and calculation deal more with speech and less with works. Petteutics differs from dice in the shape [of the piece] (for the pessos is a different sort of die contained by three triangles),<sup>145</sup> and deals equally with work and speech. For as one throws the pieces one says something too, for example 'six, five, four' or 'three sixes' or suchlike.

Since I have referred to arithmetic and calculation, note that they differ, for arithmetic is concerned with the forms of numbers, and calculation with the matter.<sup>146</sup> There are two forms of number, even and odd, and three forms of the even, the evenly even (ultimately divisible into equal portions right down to the unit), the even-with-remainder (capable of many divisions [by two] but not to an ultimate unit), and the even-odd (capable of only one [such] division, whose halves are odd [numbers]). The odd also has three forms: one is the first and incomposite, and there are two others, which Nicomachos has taught with precision. Its matter, on the other hand, is the multiplicity of units, for example multiplication, what is four times four and five times five, and suchlike. And this is not all—for this is easy for everyone, for even small children know multiplications. But [Nicomachos] also makes some elegant points, e.g. about the statues, on [the first of] which was written, 'I have the next plus a third of the third', and on the second, 'I have the next plus a third of the first', and on the third, 'I have eight minae plus a third of the middle'. He also [tells us] about the streams of the lion pouring into the tank, and about other methods.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> The function of the triangles is unclear, and the presence of the number may be the result of a corruption. A *talus* may incorporate a variety of shapes.

<sup>146</sup> Ol. uses Plato's separation of arithmetic and calculation as an excuse for a digression on mathematics, looked at rather from the point of view of the scholastic dichotomist than that of the mathematician. Parallels in David, 64.14-20, and Ps.-El., 19.25-26W suggest that this is regular Alexandrian material. It is noteworthy that the lecturer takes little mathematical knowledge for granted.

<sup>147</sup> Nicomachus of Gerasa, himself a second century Pythagorizer influenced by Platonism, may be assumed to have been a standard mathematical source for later Neoplatonism. Material relevant to Ol.'s present discussion occurs at *Intro.* 1.7-13. The number puzzles are also preserved at *Anth. Pal.* 14.7 (lion) and 51 (statue), but in the latter case the Greek substitutes 10 for 8. In Ol.'s version statue A is 36 minae (30 + 6), B 30 (18 + 12) C 20 (8+12). The lion was a fountain with four spouts emptying at the rate of one jar in 2 days, in 3 days, in 4 days, and in 1/4 day. The problem was the time taken for all four together to fill it (perhaps 4.72).

So Socrates says—not with a view to lessening the reputation of the orator, but to refer what Gorgias had said back to himself—and says 'If someone asked me, "what does arithmetic"<sup>148</sup> deal with?', I would say "with speech". And if he said "with what sort of speech?" I would reply in the same way [as we did] in the case of medicine and the other craft. So now you, too, tell me about the sort of speech that rhetoric deals with'.

4.9. **'Manual-work'** (450b9): linguistic experts seize upon the two words 'manual-work' and 'achieving' as not in use. It is true that they are not in use. But we say that since it is Gorgias who is speaking, [Plato] introduces these words, which are regional dialect, to suit him. For [Gorgias] is from Leontini. So too in the *Phaedo* [Plato] makes Cebes use local dialect. So he says 'May Zeus ken'.<sup>149</sup>

4.10. **'Geometry'** (450d6-7): finish reading the [previous] sentence at this point and begin [the next] with 'petteutics', so that the sentence reads 'Both draughtsplaying and other crafts deal equally with speech and action'.<sup>150</sup>

4.11. **'And achievement is through speech'** (450d9-e1): because it is Socrates who is speaking, he does not say 'achieving' but 'achievement'.

4.12. **'And if someone wanted to be quarrelsome in argument (logos) he might assume'** (450e6-7): 'if someone wanted to be difficult and quarrelsome, he would take you to be saying arithmetic is rhetoric, since it too is about speech. However, I do not think that is what you are saying.' It is possible to construct from this a first figure syllogism: 'Arithmetic has its achievement in speech, what has its achievement in speech is rhetoric, therefore arithmetic is rhetoric'.<sup>151</sup>

4.13. **'For instance, if someone asked me'** (451a7): you see how Socrates attributes the mistake to himself? So Socrates' character is revealed here.

<sup>148</sup> Accepting W.'s suggested emendation from *Grg.* 451b1.

<sup>149</sup> *Phd.* 62a. Note that Ol., who is not interested in language per se, is simply defending Plato (much admired for his Attic) against charges of poor Greek, no doubt those of expert Atticizers. What is clearly an *ad hoc* explanation in Ol. becomes fact in the scholia.

<sup>150</sup> It is to be assumed that Ol. did not consider contemporary texts to be reliable on matters of punctuation. Burnet did not punctuate at all here, but Ol.'s interest in classification alerts him to the need for it.

<sup>151</sup> On Ol.'s fondness for recasting the text into syllogisms of various figures, see Tarrant (1997c).



4.14. **'Like those who draft resolutions in the people's Assembly'** (451b7-c1): in the old days if someone had a motion, or a law to propose, or something else to say, the clerk of the assembly would announce his name and that of his deme and that of his father, e.g. 'Demosthenes, [son] of Demosthenes, from Paianieus'. If on some occasions he had to read several motions, in the first he would announce the name of the proposer, his father and his deme, and with the rest of the motions, so as not to repeat himself unnecessarily, he would say 'The other details are the same, but another motion is to be read'.<sup>152</sup> In the same way Socrates says 'If someone asked me, "What does calculation deal with?" I would have said in the words of the clerk, "The other details are the same".' Note that the things that arithmetic deals with are also what calculation deals with, namely the even and the odd, but arithmetic deals with their forms, and calculation with their matter.

4.15. **'Calculation considers how numerous the odd and the even are, both relative to themselves and relative to each other'** (451c3-4): for multiplication can be self-multiplication and other-multiplication. Self-multiplication is when I multiply the even by the even or the odd by the odd, other-multiplication when I multiply odd by the even or even by the odd.

4.16. **'And if someone asked about astronomy'** (451c5): he chose [the example of] arithmetic because of its precision, and that of astronomy because of its high regard.

4.17. **'The sun, and the moon'** (451c9): he mentions these because they are sources of light, and because by knowledge of them we know the other [heavenly bodies], and because knowledge of their eclipses is difficult, and because with their changing phases all things in this world change perceptibly.<sup>153</sup>

4.18. **'It is one of the crafts about what?'** (451d5): 'you too, Gorgias', he says, 'tell us which of the things that are these speeches of yours are about: the speech with which rhetoric professes to deal'.

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<sup>152</sup> Note Ol.'s readiness to supply historical information to explain the text. The material here is similar to that in Amm., *In De Int.* 46.5-47.5, where this passage of *Grg.* is referred to, and probably derives from an earlier *Grg.*-commentary, as it appears also in the scholia. The example of Demosthenes is common to all three.

<sup>153</sup> Ol. perceives that Plato had no need to single out these two 'planets', and so seeks to explain their relative importance.

### Lecture 5<sup>154</sup> (451d7-54b4)

5.1. 'The greatest things in human affairs, Socrates,' (451d7): instructed by Socrates' examples, Gorgias gets nearer the truth. Nevertheless, he too affects the boastfulness of Polus, and like him he praised rhetoric, rather than specifying what it is. So he too fails to say what sort of speech rhetoric deals with, or about what sort of matters it makes its speeches. Instead he praises these matters.

Note that Gorgias does not contribute his remark knowledgeably. Nevertheless it is a good and valid point that these matters are the greatest and best, for nothing is greater than the good, the fine and the just.<sup>155</sup> For the good is from God and extends over all things, so that it reaches even as far as matter itself (assuming that [matter] makes a contribution to the task of the creator) and we call that good. But the fine does not extend to all things. For matter is good, though not fine, but base. For the fine is predicated of forms alone. And of course a form that is not fitting we call base.<sup>156</sup> So the poet says of Thersites,

'he was the the basest man to come to Troy'.

The just applies to animate creatures—and of these not all, but only those who are able to assign to each his due—and not at all to the inanimate. For no-one speaks of a just meadow.

5.2. And as a rule, as it was said in the *Alcibiades*,<sup>157</sup> if we extend our attention to all visible things, these three things do not entail each other, but if we attend to acts, they do. For every good act is

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<sup>154</sup> In lecture 5 Ol. continues to discuss Gorgias' 'ambiguous' answer to Socrates' question about his profession. He includes an explanation of references to ancient drinking-songs (*skolia*) and music.

<sup>155</sup> For the distinctions between these three which follow see also 10.1, 13.6. The question had become a *topos* to be discussed in relation to *Alc.* 114b ff., but even Ol.'s commentary (109-110, cf. 126) is very different from what we find here (and at 13.6), drawing on both Proclus (*In Alc.* 319-322) and Iamblichus, who have more interest in details of the application of these terms to the higher metaphysical levels. Ol.'s treatment here is notable for explaining the differences almost exclusively with reference to the absence of justice from things without rational soul and of beauty from that which has no form, and this perhaps indicates his current desire to avoid matters of theology.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. 12.10, where *Iliad* 2.216 (quoted below) is again quoted.

<sup>157</sup> It is clear that this statement is only correct if it applies to the *interpretation* of *Alc.* which has been encountered. The different emphasis in the extant commentary on *Alc.* (109-110, 126) suggest that Ol.'s lectures would have been different at this stage of his career.

also just and fine, and every fine act is also good and just, and every just act is also good and fine.

So Socrates criticizes Gorgias' answer on two grounds, that it is ambiguous and that it is unclear. Note that someone who gives a definition of something needs to speak unambiguously and clearly. For as Plato says elsewhere,<sup>158</sup> when inquiring into something we must grasp the substance of it, since ignorance of the substance of what is being sought necessarily leads to getting it all wrong. For example, when inquiring into the immortality of the soul we ought first to seek the substance of it. Definitions teach the substance. Therefore definitions need to be agreed, since they are the starting points of demonstration.

Now the statement of Gorgias is ambiguous, because it is not his speech alone that is the greatest and best. For the doctor also makes the same claim, 'I deal with the greatest matters, for what is greater than health?'; the trainer too says 'I deal with the greatest matters, for what is greater than beauty?'; and the businessman praises money in the same way. Both the doctor and the trainer dispute with Gorgias—though not with each other, for health comes with a sort of beauty (or harmony, if not physical beauty)—but the businessman disputes with Gorgias and with everyone else too. Hence Gorgias' ambiguity. And he is unclear because he did not distinguish [rhetoric's] concerns but resorted to praise [of them].<sup>159</sup>

5.3. Note that [Socrates] does not criticize Gorgias directly, but composes the argument as if from certain traders and others encountered at a drinking-party. So since he mentions the drinking-song, we must remember our history and only then offer an interpretation.<sup>160</sup> Note that in ancient times music was a matter of great moment. For it charmed the passions. By music I mean the divine and not the debased product. That it was divine is shown by the traces that are still preserved.<sup>161</sup> That's how, on hearing the

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<sup>158</sup> Cf. 2.1, where *Phdr.* (237bc) was important. Scholars would nowadays think rather of *Meno* (71a, 86d, 100b).

<sup>159</sup> This sentence is itself vague, the word for 'concerns' being the uninformative *πράγματα*, chosen because it appears in the lemma. The words in square brackets have been supplied in the belief that Ol. is repeating the same claim as he made at 5.1 (p. 39.8-10W), where that term appears twice.

<sup>160</sup> Perhaps the clearest indication of the importance, in Ol., for the commentator to be historically informed. cf. 4.14 etc.

<sup>161</sup> See also Ol. in David 64.32-65.2 (and perhaps beyond). For reference to surviving traces of ancient uses of music, and the Pythagoras-story which follows, see Amm., *In Isag.* 13.21-25; Elias, *In Isag.* (31.8-18) has comparable

trumpet, we are roused to war, or, on hearing flute or lyre, to pleasure. In ancient times melodies were medicines for the passions. That's how the weary obtained relief from their fatigue by singing, and even in religious contexts appropriate melodies were sung, and erotic desires too were calmed by certain kinds of melodies.

An illustration: Pythagoras once met a young man accompanied by a girl playing the lyre. Being versed in assessing character from external features, he recognized that the young man's nature was good and that he was able to be benefited. Taking pity on him he instructed the girl to turn the pipe or the lyre around and to play it in that way. At once she produced a melody that calmed the young man's desire.

5.4. For this reason Plato too instructed those in his republic<sup>162</sup> to value music, not popular music, however, but the music that adorns the soul. So he said they should care about sentiments, narration, harmony, rhythm, dance-figures, and the like. By sentiments he meant not those that lead to emotional song, such as Achilles wailing and grieving by the ships, but those that have power over the passions, such as 'Endure my heart, you have endured other worse things'.<sup>163</sup> And he insisted on narration too being divine and not base, and the same with harmony, and on appropriate rhythm, and on lofty dance-figures.

5.5. They made particular use of music at drinking-parties, since these parties could stir up the passions. Dancing used to take place, and when they moved from left to right, that was called a pre-ode, when from right to left, an after-ode, and when to the middle a mid-ode. And when, if turned to the rear, they proceeded to the right, they called it a turn, if to the middle a mid-ode, and if to the left a reverse-turn. Stesichorus too mentions these things.<sup>164</sup> These

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material. The (contemporary) illustration immediately following shows the divinity of music by establishing its general *power* to charm the emotions, and the one after shows how this power *used to be used* specifically for curing them.

<sup>162</sup> See *Rep.* 2-3, 377a-401a. Again the reference is to the state sketched within *Rep.*, not to the work which is generally referred to *in the plural* to avoid confusion. Exceptions appear in traditional material at 0.1 (an ambiguous case) and 46.9 twice, where it seems that the latter example at least is due to Iamblichus, and where the former example follows so closely on the normal plural (both at 241.12W) that no confusion is risked.

<sup>163</sup> Homer, *Od.* 19.18 quoted by Plato, 390d.

<sup>164</sup> Stesichorus appears to have written on topics such as music and metre

dances were symbolic, for they were imitating the movements of the heavens. For movement from left to right is setting, and from right to left is rising. Similarly those beginning to sing and in mid-song and at the end of the song were suggesting the earth, which is the starting-point as the centre, the mid-point by position, and the final point as the foundation of all things. Now when the music left off for a time, they took wreaths. And someone took it and then when singing did not pass it on to the next man but to the one opposite him, then he to the first, and that one to the second. The transfer was crooked and as a result it has been called the *skolion*—the ‘crooked song’.<sup>165</sup>

5.6. Note then that they were talking of songs. And the doctor said ‘My task is the greatest; for who does not love to possess health?’. The trainer says the same about fine physique, and the businessman about money, and someone else says that it is a fine thing to be in one’s prime with one’s friends. [Socrates] omits this last as of no use to him, and employs the [first] three.<sup>166</sup>

What he says amounts to the following: ‘You say, Gorgias, “I deal with the greatest matters”; but the doctor would say to me “Do you allow him to say that? He is wrong, for I deal with the greatest matters, and neither you nor Gorgias possess anything greater than health.” In the same way both the trainer and the businessman will praise their own task. Since this is what they say, try to tell me clearly what are the materials of rhetoric’.

And [Gorgias] answers, near the truth, but he does not clearly spell it out. For he says ‘[Rhetoric] is persuading jurymen in court and councillors in council and assembled citizens in the assembly’. Observe how he speaks unclearly—except that by court he is alluding to the just, by council to the beneficial, by assembly to the

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(see TB1-20 in Davis, 1991, 145-48). Comparable sources for dance movements and their imitation of the heavens are late, and include scholia on Pindar and a passage of Marius Victorinus. See Mullen (1982), 225-30.

<sup>165</sup> Finally Ol. gives an etymology of *skolion*, as if etymology were a key to understanding. Likewise we find alternative etymologies in Plutarch, *Mor.* 615bc, one of which is close to that given here. The *skolion* has also attracted much comment in the scholia, with greater emphasis on historical and literary matters. Carbonara Naddei comments at length. For the *skolion* see further Michaelides (1978), 297, Barker (1984), 103 n.16.

<sup>166</sup> The fourth line is given in the scholia and by Athenaeus 694c. As Carbonara Naddei notes, 151-2, some account is taken of the general sentiment of the fourth line in other Platonic passages treating the first three.

fine.<sup>167</sup> And he said 'to persuade', which is the activity; and this is fine too, for it's got to have an activity, but not necessarily a result.<sup>168</sup> For the doctor heals, i.e. 'engages in an activity creative of health', but he does not necessarily heal everyone. So too the orator professes persuasion, but he does not necessarily have persuasion as his result.

5.7. '**Wealth without deceit.**' (451e5): the businessman does not seek wealth without deceit, but with great tyranny.<sup>169</sup> But since [Socrates] offers the saying as from the composer of the song, he adds 'without deceit'.

5.8. '**And suppose after him the trainer**' (452b1): he cited the trainer after the doctor, since the doctor deals with the parts [of the body] just by themselves, whereas the trainer deals with the combination of them and such and such a state of agreement between the parts and their beauty.

5.9. '**In complete disdain for them all**' (452b8): note how he no longer adds 'without dishonesty', since it is the businessman himself who speaks, who has contempt for all others.

5.10. '**It is in reality the greatest good, Socrates**' (452d5): Gorgias answers and says 'My task is the one which is in truth the greatest good and the cause both of freedom for men and rule over others for each orator in his own city'. Note that he speaks badly: for how is anybody a cause of freedom who does not cast off his own enslavement, I mean enslavement by the passions? For as Sophocles says in the *Republic* (329c), the passions are like a rabid dog and a savage master. So this sort of rhetoric, with bad ends in view, cannot bring freedom. Furthermore it does not have power over all, but is even in another's power. For the crafts have need of one another, so that though a doctor in some trouble has need of an orator, it is also the case that the orator when sick has need of the doctor and summons him.

5.11. '**And I tell you, with this power**' (452e4-5): observe how Socrates here calls it power, but later he will show that [Gorgias' rhetoric] is not power. For power always aims at the good.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> This odd intrusion of what is almost allegory arises from Ol.'s need to underline trichotomies which have already appeared at 4.4 and 5.1.

<sup>168</sup> It may be that Ol. is calling attention to Gorgias' use of the present infinitive, *πείθειν*, at 452e8, implying a process rather than a completed act.

<sup>169</sup> The scholia have 'Even if it comes with tyranny', which may well have been the lecturer's intention here too.

<sup>170</sup> Rhetoric's lack of power is a pervasive theme in this commentary, and

[Gorgias] says to him 'If you profess this [craft], you will have everyone as your slave, the doctor and the trainer and the money-maker'. I have explained how the crafts have need of one another.

5.12. **'For be sure I am persuaded'** (453a8): he is going to show that there are two modes of proceeding by question and answer, one aiming at victory, one at the discovery of truth. These modes differ from one another in regard to insight and in regard to life. [They differ] in regard to life, because the mode aiming at the discovery of truth will be refuted and yield in a friendly manner, whereas the mode that aims at victory will not accept refutation but is likely both to batter the interlocutor and to upset the audience.<sup>171</sup> [They differ] in regard to insight, because the mode aiming at victory is prepared to win on the basis of ignorance, whereas the mode that aims at discovery tries to learn.<sup>172</sup>

So Socrates offers an invitation to be refuted rather than to refute. For a man who is refuted is benefited. So he says 'That is my preference: now you tell me first whether you prefer to converse in that manner, so that if you persuade me I shall follow your teachings, and if I refute you and persuade you, you will follow mine'. But in a bid to escape the encounter Gorgias says (458b-c): 'There are many who wish to question me and I must answer them as they desire, so that they will not depart'. Then, after they say 'We are not reluctant, indeed we shall greatly enjoy the encounter', and in fact enthusiastically say 'No-one finds it tedious listening to you', he is shamed into agreeing to the questioning and answering.

So since, as I have said, this is what [Gorgias] is going to say, Socrates begins by saying to him 'Tell me yourself which is your choice, and I will tell you mine'. He teaches us in this way that the leader of the conversation must not leap ahead and say 'I know what you want to say and it is not the case'. For if one says this and begins to undermine [the thesis], one overturns oneself rather than the interlocutor. For he can say 'I did not say that, you did'.

5.13. **'The one who paints figures'** (453c7-8): if Zeuxis had been the only one, clearly he would himself have painted all the

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indeed in *Grg.*, though most prominent in the arguments with Polus. Ol. chooses therefore to emphasize foreshadowings of the power theme, cf. 7.1.

<sup>171</sup> W.'s <ὅς> seems superfluous.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. 8.1. The most obvious Platonic text for highlighting these contrasts is *Euthd.*; but within the Neoplatonic corpus the key text may be rather *Tht.* 164c-168c.

animals, and there would have been no point in asking what sorts of animals. But since there were many of them, he does not fall into error in asking what sort of living creatures.<sup>173</sup> 'So you now tell me about what sort of things you produce persuasion, since arithmetic too concerns persuasion. For it persuades concerning problems of odd and even.' Note that the persuasion of rhetoric is persuasive, whereas the persuasion of arithmetic and similar sciences is instructive.<sup>174</sup>

5.14. **'Then answer, Gorgias'** (454b3): 'Since you too, Gorgias, believe that persuasion is associated with other crafts too, please tell me what sort of persuasion it falls to rhetoric to produce.'

### Lecture 6<sup>175</sup> (454b-455d)

6.1. **'Well then, Socrates, I say it is the craft of persuasion'** (454b): Gorgias has been taught a lesson and has [now] stated the activity of rhetoric, i.e. persuading, its goal, i.e. persuasion,<sup>176</sup> and its materials. Next Socrates investigates how many modes of persuasion there are. For as Socrates himself will say, one mode of persuasion is instructive, the other merely persuasive. And the instructive mode is internally motivated and for those with vision, while the merely persuasive mode is externally motivated and is as if for the blind.<sup>177</sup> For instance, if someone asks a man of understanding if the soul is immortal, he is not swept along by external forces so as

<sup>173</sup> Ol.'s explanation sounds even odder than the Platonic original. Dodds (1959), *ad loc.*, observes that Zeuxis was famed for the originality of his subjects, hence did paint different sorts of figures from his rivals.

<sup>174</sup> Persuasive vs. pedagogic reasoning will be the subject of the next lecture.

<sup>175</sup> In lecture 6 Ol. discusses Gorgias' specification of rhetoric as the craft of persuasion, and analyses different kinds of rhetoric.

<sup>176</sup> It is important to note that Ol. here sees 'persuasion' primarily from the point of view of the person persuaded: i.e. as persuasion-induced confidence.

<sup>177</sup> This standard contrast between two kinds of rhetoric is foreshadowed at 3.9 and 5.13, but is otherwise confined to this lecture. For the image of vision used here, the obvious Platonic text for comparison is *Tht.* 200e-201c, where it is pointed out that a jury will *believe* a witness or witnesses in a case where *knowledge* is impossible unless one had oneself *seen* the crime committed. Note how the internal/external motivation distinction, intended to apply to those persuaded rather than their persuaders, runs parallel to the instructive/merely persuasive rhetoric distinction; Ol. has earlier cited Gorgias himself as an example of one who is externally-motivated (*ἑτεροκίνητος*), i.e. at the bidding of others (1.8, 1.11), and seen the rhetorician as one dependent on the expertise of the statesman, 2.4.



to say 'Yes, immortal, that's what Plato and Aristotle think'.<sup>178</sup> Instead, he tries on his own initiative to put forward demonstrations of his own.

By contrast the merely persuasive mode is externally produced and relies on others. If the course of action for which it relies on another's judgment is good, it is like the blind being led by those who see, while if their decision is poor and one has been steered towards it by another's judgment, it is like the blind being led by the blind. Hence we should recognize that the merely persuasive [mode of persuasion] deals with falsehoods as well as truths, whereas learning, i.e. instructive [persuasion], only applies to truths. The following syllogism of the second figure is possible:

Merely persuasive [persuasion] produces true and false beliefs.  
Instructive [persuasion] does not produce true and false beliefs.  
Therefore merely persuasive [persuasion] is not instructive.<sup>179</sup>

6.2. So Gorgias says 'I deal with persuasion directed towards the mob'. Hence it is shown by three means that Gorgias employed the merely persuasive mode. First, from the qualities of the persons concerned, because he was speaking to non-experts and to the democracy, and not to a governing élite. Second, from the reference to 'the greatest of matters', because non-experts were listening to these greatest of matters. Third, from the time involved, because they used to speak in a short time owing to its being measured by the clepsydra.<sup>180</sup>

So if they spoke about the greatest of matters even to non-experts, and sought to persuade them in a short time, that was not productive of understanding. It is reasonable enough that even non-experts should be persuaded, but it was not possible for them to

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<sup>178</sup> In *De An.* 3.5 the active intellect part of the soul alone achieves this status. Earlier Aristotelian works in which he might have been more receptive to the idea of personal immortality may not have survived until Ol.'s day, but probably still exerted an indirect influence. Ol. as a follower of Ammonius adopts a Platonizing reading of Aristotle, and commentaries on the *De Anima* by late Neoplatonists illustrate how his theory of the intellect can be reconciled with Plato; see further H.J. Blumenthal (1976, 1981).

<sup>179</sup> In the syllogism the normal word for 'instructive' (διδασκαλικός) has been replaced by 'productive of understanding' (ἐπιστημονικός), but with no real change of meaning, since it is regularly assumed that understanding is the result of any genuine teaching-process.

<sup>180</sup> Another of Ol.'s speculative historical notes: as *Ap.* shows by Socrates' complaints (37ab), this was an Athenian practice not adopted by the Greek world at large.

acquire understanding in a short time—it needs longer.<sup>181</sup> So [Gorgias] did not practise instructive persuasion.

It is worth inquiring why we criticize rhetoric for not being instructive. For if demonstrations and understanding are of the universal, whereas this activity deals with particulars, it is with good justification that it is not instructive but merely persuasive. We say that even those who concern themselves with particulars are able to use syllogisms, but that syllogisms cannot be derived from two particular premises—in every case one must be universal. For instance:

So-and-so is a thief,  
Every thief is unjust—note the universal,  
Therefore so-and-so is unjust.

So they too should have used a universal premise, but they were unable to, since they persisted in composing their speeches for delivery to non-experts.<sup>182</sup>

6.3. **'And about the things which are just and unjust.'** (454b7): [Gorgias] referred only to justice and injustice, leaving aside the fine and the beneficial, because rhetoric primarily deals with the justice and injustice.<sup>183</sup>

6.4. **'I also of course suspected'** (454b8): I have already said (5.12) that a participant in a philosophical discussion should not leap ahead and say to the other 'I know what you mean to say', since, if he is going to refute it, it is himself and not another whom he refutes. What Socrates is saying is this: 'I suspected, indeed knew, that you were going to say this, but I didn't say so before, so that you would respect this rule in my case too, and not leap ahead of my replies. I am not saying this [just] on your account, but because I want what remains to be properly completed'.

6.5. **'Do you call something having learnt?'** (454c7-8): at this point [Socrates] begins to divide persuasion into the instructive and the merely persuasive. First he divides, then he demonstrates, since demonstrations are based on division. Observe that persuasion can be of two kinds, as I have already said (6.1), and also threefold, if we include the conviction that is superior to demonstration, and

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<sup>181</sup> Cf. again *Ap.* 37ab.

<sup>182</sup> The material of this paragraph is obviously important for Olympiodoran Platonism, being comparable with *In Alc.* 89.13-18, 165.1-8 and *In Phd.* 2.16.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. 4.4 etc.

which proceeds from the common notions, and says 'things equal to the same thing are themselves equal', or 'if equal numbers are added to equal numbers, the sums are equal'.<sup>184</sup>

6.6. **'Yes, you're right in thinking so'** (454d4): Gorgias has assumed it to be so, whereas Socrates demonstrates it.

6.7. **'Is there any true and false conviction?'** (454d5): here is the first premise of the syllogism.

6.8. **'Now then, is there true and false knowledge?'** (454d6-7): here is the second premise, which says that understanding cannot be both true and false.

6.9. **'Then it's clear that it's not the same'** (454d7-8): the conclusion, that the merely persuasive [mode of rhetoric] does not also lead to understanding.<sup>185</sup>

6.10. **'Without knowing'** (454e4): he uses 'knowledge' as an alternative for 'understanding', as Aristotle too says in his work on demonstration.<sup>186</sup> 'Since knowing and understanding are the same thing'. Remember this, for we are going to need it (10.1-2).

6.11. **'Then neither does the orator teach'** (455a2-3): 'He's not instructive', he says, 'but persuasive'. This happens, when there is a confusion of roles. For we must understand that the same thing can be the concern of the statesman, the orator and the individual craftsman in one way or another. For the statesman gives the instruction that there should be a doctor in the city,<sup>187</sup> and that the doctor be a worker

'for cutting out arrows and applying gentle remedies'.<sup>188</sup>

Then comes the orator who merely persuades. And just as the doctor uses different remedies to treat different sufferings, so too the orator persuades in a variety of ways to suit the individual case.<sup>189</sup> He persuades the doctor with one group of arguments, the engineer with another. But once he has persuaded the doctor, the

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<sup>184</sup> These are the first two 'common notions' (KE 1-2) which are found in Euclid, *Elements* 1.1.1. It is taken for granted that Aristotle is correct in requiring indemonstrable first principles. On common notions see Tarrant (1997b), 188-92.

<sup>185</sup> Ol. as often carefully points out during the reading of the text the elements of the argument, and the way they can be read as syllogisms.

<sup>186</sup> *An.Po.* 71a26-29 etc.

<sup>187</sup> W. compares *Rep.* 407c-408b; *Euthd.* 291d-292a seems no less relevant.

<sup>188</sup> Homer, *Il.* 11.515.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. *Phdr.* 271d-272a.

orator should say nothing further by way of medical advice—only the doctor [should speak]. Otherwise there will be confusion [of roles].

For instance Gorgias himself says 'I'm more of a doctor even than doctors, because when my brother Herodicus was unable to persuade the sick man to take the cure, I persuaded him'. Note that he shouldn't speak like this, for he didn't persuade him by means of medical knowledge. So if he claims to be a doctor, he will be also an engineer and a builder, and there will be confusion;<sup>190</sup> so there ought to be a proper allocation of duties. That was the trouble when Demosthenes, who was a orator, caused confusion by saying they should fight in Macedonia,<sup>191</sup> for that is not an orator's task but a general's. The latter is the man who says where to fight and how, just as the engineer says where there should be a harbour or a wall, and where there should not be. So each person should stick to his own steps in the process, the doctor to medical tasks, the engineer to engineering matters, the musician to his own tasks—so that he should not only have concern for harmony (i.e. that of the lyre), but also for the finest of sentiments, since music is directed towards men, not towards irrational animals—though even irrational creatures delight in a tune: shepherds for instance use one tune to drive the sheep to grazing, and another to summon them and bring them into one place. So one should not practise music in this narrow sense, but the sentiments should be urbane and not the mythical things they say about the gods, nor the sorts of things they say about weeping heroes. For not even in the case of *men* should you recite songs about their eating meat and drinking wine,<sup>192</sup> since these songs suit those who live like grazing-beasts.<sup>193</sup> In every case let each man take care of his own

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<sup>190</sup> An important tactic for Ol. is to make *Grg.*'s emphasis on distinguishing the arenas of the crafts correspond to the *Republic*'s doctrine of the division of labour.

<sup>191</sup> Demosthenes 4.19-23, 40-45.

<sup>192</sup> Ol. is thinking of the latter part of *Rep.* 2 (377e ff.), where Plato criticizes Homer and others for basely misrepresenting the gods in their stories, and the early part of *Rep.* 3 where their portrait of heroes is also criticized, as when it involves unwarranted expressions of grief (387d-388b) or over-indulgence in food and liquor (389e-390b).

<sup>193</sup> *Phlb.* 21c compares the life of neat pleasure rather with that of jellyfish or shellfish. But the present term occurs at *Laws* 807a, and is particularly apt for those who spend all their time eating.

proper task and not lay hands on someone else's.<sup>194</sup> Otherwise confusion is bound to occur.

6.12. **'For I tell you, I can't yet grasp'** (455b1): Socrates presents himself as puzzled in order that he may encourage Gorgias to enter into a dialectical discussion.

6.13. **'You must suppose that I'm also'** (455c5): I said earlier that we sometimes use the passions opportunely and for benefit (3.13). That's surely how Socrates earlier asked him to be brief (449c). So now too he exploits [Gorgias'] ambition with benefit. Accordingly he makes this claim: 'There are those here who want to be your students. I am leader of these students, and I'm asking you a question on their behalf, for they're probably embarrassed to ask you themselves. So though it's by me that you're asked, imagine that you are being asked by them too—something like this: "What shall we get out of it if we study with you, Gorgias? On which topics can we become competent to advise the city? Is it only about the just and the unjust, or also about the kind of thing Socrates was referring to?" So try, Gorgias, to answer me and them'. Observe the Socratic character—he even calls himself a student, because he welcomes the advantage.

### Lecture 7<sup>195</sup> (455 d6-457 c3)

7.1. **'Yes, I'll try to reveal clearly the whole power of rhetoric to you, Socrates'** (455 d6): encouraged by what Socrates has said to him, Gorgias undertakes to reveal all the mysteries of rhetoric to Socrates. So he says 'I will reveal clearly to you the power of rhetoric'. And observe that he called it 'power'. Power operates in two ways, for the good and also for the bad, but what operates in two ways is not good. What? We have received internal motivation<sup>196</sup> from God. Must it not always be a good thing that we have? We say that it was God himself who gave us internal motivation,

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<sup>194</sup> Ol. has allowed himself to be side-tracked into discussing the proper role of the musician because it might look to pupils as if he were not allowing the musician to have a moral role; he now returns to the main subject of the lemma.

<sup>195</sup> In lecture 7 Ol. comments on Gorgias' claim about the *power* of rhetoric (see note on 5.11), and the rhetorical teacher's non-responsibility for its misuse. Ol. expresses his own views on the notion of 'power' (*dynamis*) and pedagogic responsibility.

<sup>196</sup> I.e. the power to act as we choose, power *within ourselves*.

and he is not responsible for our wrongdoing. But because he also gave us the common notions, we ought to compare actions by judging in accordance with them and not keep acting for the worse. So too he gave us eyes for the better, but there are occasions when we use them for the worse. That's how Paris looked upon Helen with intemperate eyes.

7.2. Note that Gorgias is defending his own craft. For we must understand that Gorgias arrived in Argos, and they were so hostile to him that they imposed a penalty on those who studied with him. So he says 'We should not hate the teachers of rhetoric. For the physical trainer and the all-out fighter<sup>197</sup> and the teacher of hoplite-combat are not to be blamed, but only those who learn and make bad use of it. So too the teacher of rhetoric is not responsible, but only those who learn it and use it badly'.

But we say that those who teach it are also responsible. For if they said 'Do not use it badly', they would be blameless, but as it is they do not give this warning. Nor would they be good even if they did warn them, since their knowledge of things is not based on scientific understanding. That they do not warn them to use [rhetoric] for the good<sup>198</sup> is clear from their composing speeches for incoherent and unreal cases too, thinking them worthy of equal honours.<sup>199</sup> So it is a pointless boast [of Gorgias'] when he steals the business of the various particular craftsmen. For he says 'We [orators] are persuasive about dockyards and other things and we persuade the sick to take their medicine'. But note that this is not the task of orators. For the statesman gives the instruction that there be a doctor, and the orator ought only to persuade, and then the particular craftsman proceeds to his work as he wishes.

7.3. 'Yes, Gorgias, that's said about Themistocles' (456a4): Themistocles is older than Socrates, hence [Socrates] said 'That's said'. Pericles is a contemporary, as he reminds us in the *Alcibiades*. By

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<sup>197</sup> In a long marginal note on the pankratiast, the fighter who engages in a mixture of boxing and wrestling, the MS. quotes extensively from an extant work of Philostratus, *De Gymn.* 265-6 Kayser.

<sup>198</sup> Reading <ἐπ> ἀγαθῷ.

<sup>199</sup> These incoherent or unreal cases, or ἀσύστατα ζητήματα, are referred to by Hermogenes, *De Stat.* 31.19-34.15 Rabe, who begins by defining their opposite, the συνεστῶτα ζητήματα. Ol.'s point is that rhetoric cannot be attaching importance to its own good use, if it prides itself on the care it takes over incoherent cases. The term ἀσύστατα ζητήματα is very helpful for Ol.'s purpose, since it seems to conflict with the popular definition of any craft as a σύστημα.

'wall through the middle' [Socrates] means the one which still exists in Greece. For [Pericles] constructed the middle wall on Munychia too, one part looking down on Piraeus and the other on Phaleron, intending that if one [wall] were overthrown the other would still be of service for quite some time.<sup>200</sup>

7.4. **'Yes, that's what amazes me, Gorgias, and that's why I've been asking you all this time'**<sup>201</sup> (456a4): he calls [the power of rhetoric] 'demonic', not in praise but being critical, for he is criticising him for his arrogance. Note that the immortals and the angels are always good, so we do not say that an angel is bad. The division between the good and the bad begins to occur at the level of demons, for demons are bad.<sup>202</sup> So 'demonic' means 'bad'. And if someone says 'But if he criticizes, why does he express amazement at it?',<sup>203</sup> answer that the term is sometimes understood in a bad sense.

7.5. **'Yes, and if you only knew the whole of it'** (456a7): [Gorgias] thought that [Socrates] had been frank in praise of it and replies 'If you knew everything about rhetoric you would be full of praise for it'.

7.6. **'And I tell you, if an orator and a doctor went into any city'** (456b6): he proceeds to the universal from a particular example and he undertakes to persuade everyone.

7.7. **'And he had to compete in speeches'** (456b7): 'speeches' is well put, for he is now not referring to actions. For the orator does not know what sort of purgation it is necessary to administer.

7.8. **'A mass of people'** (456c6): 'mass' is well put, since he mostly has to do with uneducated people and the rabble.

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<sup>200</sup> On the walls see Dodds' note on e6. Two basic related problems occur here: (i) is Ol. identifying the 'wall through the middle' with the 'middle wall' or distinguishing it? (ii) does 'looking down on' refer to the ends or the sides of the 'middle wall? The pair of walls alluded to at the end of 7.3 must surely be the original Long Walls to Piraeus and Phaleron respectively, either of which could continue to serve without the other so long as the middle wall *from Athens to Munychia* was intact. Yet the wall described as *on Munychia* sounds more like connecting wall between Piraeus and Phaleron, which was relevant if the middle wall was to serve effectively. While this distinction may have been intended, it is not clearly made, and one should recognize Ol.'s lack of intimate knowledge of Athenian geography, which might have caused some confusion.

<sup>201</sup> Ol. reads *πάλιν* (again) for *πάσαι* (all this time).

<sup>202</sup> Note that Ol.'s super-human powers now include angels (cf. 49.1), hence demons can now be seen as universally bad. This would have been an advantage when presenting his ideas to Christian audiences.

<sup>203</sup> *θαυμάζω* frequently means 'I admire'.

7.9. 'Among masses' (457a6): observe again that he professes to speak to the mob. 'In short' means 'in brief'.

### Lecture 8<sup>204</sup> (457c4-460a)

8.1. 'I think that you as well as I, Gorgias' (457c4): This is where he means to say what we spoke of earlier (5.12). For since he intends to refute him, in order that [Gorgias] should not be upset by being refuted, he first draws a distinction between modes of debate.<sup>205</sup> He says there are two: one aiming at the discovery of truth, the other aiming at victory.<sup>206</sup> Note that these modes differ in procedure and in result in regard to both insight and life. [They differ] in procedure in regard to life, because the mode which aims at truth makes its points with goodwill, whereas the other does so polemically. [They differ in procedure] in regard to insight, because the mode that welcomes truth aims at its own benefit, whereas the other mode aims at conflict and demolition [of the argument].<sup>207</sup> [They differ] in life in regard to the result, because those who aim at truth depart in possession of the firmest friendship, whereas those who [aim at] victory depart in conflict, striking one another, so that their hearers too are annoyed and criticize themselves for the simple reason that they have listened.<sup>208</sup>

So he says 'I prefer to be refuted and to refute; and in particular to be refuted, if I speak badly, since it is better to be benefited'—for the

<sup>204</sup> In lecture 8 Ol. comments on Gorgias' disinclination to subject himself to the elenchus. He analyses two sorts of refutation.

<sup>205</sup> On this distinction compare 5.12 above, with note.

<sup>206</sup> The passage which follows is full of difficulties, not least because Ol. (or the recorder) does not give the way in which the two modes differ in result from the cognitive point of view: presumably one terminating in knowledge, the other in ignorance. We should have expected the lecturer to have been more careful with his dichotomies in view of their popularity: the marginalia here include a valiant attempt at reconstruction, many features of which cannot be deduced from the text. The parallel text at 5.12 is little help here. The contrasts *in regard to life* are their willingness/unwillingness to be refuted (procedural?) and the resultant friendship/hostility; the contrast with regard to insight is again a single one, between the attempt at discovery and the willingness to win the argument in ignorance.

<sup>207</sup> Here *κατάλυσις* must be employed in its destructive sense, though it can also be used for coming to terms.

<sup>208</sup> Reminiscent of the reaction that the Isocrates-figure tells Crito he would have experienced had he heard Socrates conversing with the eristics at *Euthd.* 305a2, though very different to the reaction of the actual spectators (303b).



doctor too is more disposed to be healed than to heal—‘and to refute him if he speaks badly’—for it would be impious to let it pass [unrefuted]. For if doctors drive out foul humours from the body, so too, only much more, philosophers strive to clean out the wicked opinions from the soul.<sup>209</sup>

8.2. But in response Gorgias seeks to escape and says ‘But these people present here presumably do not want speech but actions, and we must also be concerned for them and release them.’ But when he said that, there was a protest, as those present say ‘We are very happy to listen.’ And Chaerephon says ‘All those present here and I too are willing to listen.’ Then Callicles says ‘It would give me pleasure to listen all day long.’ So when they said this, Gorgias, though unwilling, agrees through shame to gratify them by being refuted. And then they put forward their views and proceed to the encounter, and [Socrates] refutes him.

8.3. **‘Speaking wrongly or enigmatically’** (457d2-3): ‘wrongly’ concerns the thought, ‘enigmatically’ concerns the expression.<sup>210</sup>

8.4. **‘You’re saying things which don’t quite follow’** (457e2): note the divine character of Socrates. For he did not say ‘You speak inconsistently and falsely’, but ‘not quite consistently’, taking the sting out of the allegation with his restraint.

8.5. **‘Than to rid someone else of it’** (458a7): for one who has not previously purified himself could never purify another.

8.6. **‘As a false belief’** (458a8-b1): he says this in the *Theaetetus*.<sup>211</sup> For there is nothing worse than a false opinion. And if the opinion that is false were only to do with words, there would be no great damage. But if it concerns the greatest matters, it is the cause of a great deal of harm.

8.7. **‘But perhaps we ought to have thought of these people here too’** (458b5-6): for it is a mark of someone who loves himself to be concerned for himself alone and not for those with him. For we ought to be concerned that everyone should benefit.

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<sup>209</sup> For the medical comparison when treating *elenchus* see *Sph.* 230b-e, a passage with great influence from the earliest years of the revival of ancient Platonism (see especially Philo of Larissa apud Stob. *Ecl.* 2.39.20ff.).

<sup>210</sup> *Grg.* 457d, and so too *Ol.*, uses the corresponding positive adverbs. We have adjusted to suit Irwin’s translation.

<sup>211</sup> W. cites 194c1-2, but unless *Ol.* is referring to the more familiar passage from the ethical digression, 176bc, then it is likely that he has confused *Tht.* with *Sph.* 230b-e, where *Theaetetus* is again interlocutor.

8.8. **'We'll prolong it'** (458b7-c1): 'Let us not', he says, 'stretch out the discourse and find that those present are getting no benefit [from it]'.

8.9. **'The noise'** (458c3): Chaerephon says 'Gorgias and Socrates, I am sure you hear from the protest how everyone wishes to listen to you'.

8.10. **'And for myself I hope I'm never so busy'** (458c5): as a philosopher Chaerephon understood, and desired to listen to such a conversation.

8.11. **'I don't know when I've been pleased'** (458d2): Callicles did not say 'I was benefited', but 'I was pleased', indicating his pleasure-loving nature.

8.12. **'It's coming to be shameful for me'** (458d7): then Gorgias says 'If everyone wishes to hear me, it would be base not to engage in discourse. For I undertook to give answers to everyone. So since they wish it I must do what I undertook'. Here we have an ethical lesson, that if you give an undertaking you must fulfil it and not make a liar of yourself, but in every case bring it to completion.

### Lecture 9<sup>212</sup> (458e3-460a4)

9.1. **'Then I'll tell you what I am surprised at in what you are saying, Gorgias'** (458e3): after hearing Gorgias' inconsistent statements, Socrates criticizes him. But he does not introduce his refutation in an aggressive manner, but gently and reasonably. For he didn't say 'I can't respect' or 'I condemn' or anything like that, but 'I am surprised at what you say. Perhaps this is because I didn't understand something which you were quite correct to say'.

It is worth stating in what sense Gorgias could have been speaking well and yet Socrates not have understood him properly, and also how Gorgias could have been speaking less well and Socrates making a worthwhile objection. For [Gorgias] has said that the orator deals with both justice and injustice, but also, retreating, he said rhetoric has a power that inclines two ways, to injustice and to justice, although it spurns injustice. Now if rhetoric concerns justice and injustice, it knows their nature. And someone who knows their nature is a man of understanding, and someone who

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<sup>212</sup> In lecture 9 Ol. comments on Socrates' claim that Gorgias has given inconsistent answers. He analyses the elenchus into its various aspects, and comments on the first of them.

understands is not inclined to change his mind—for while opinions are inclined to run off, understanding does not.<sup>213</sup> And someone who cannot be persuaded to change his mind *always* pursues what he understands [to be right]. So rhetoric too always embraces justice. How then could it also incline towards wickedness?

9.2. In this way [Gorgias] is refuted for not speaking well. But perhaps it is he who spoke well, and Socrates' refutation is misguided. For he might object: 'What's this? Just because an oath precedes medical studies, requiring doctors not to dispense harmful medicines, and certain people disregard it and provide them, is medicine now overturned?'<sup>214</sup> So even if there are some who use rhetoric for wicked purposes, it should not itself held accountable for that.' We say to this that, whereas in that case this very act of dispensing harmful medicines is forbidden at the outset, you do not make a similar pronouncement that nobody should use [rhetoric] for wicked purposes. Furthermore this is the very *definition* of rhetoric which demands it be a craft with a power to deliver a persuasive account *in every case*.<sup>215</sup> So in any event it has been shown that what he said was inconsistent.

Next [Socrates] advances a refutation in two parts, one proceeding from the facts of the matter, as we shall learn as the discussion progresses,<sup>216</sup> and another deriving from the actual manner of his answer. And the [refutation] deriving from his answer is itself double, one [part] employing embarrassment, the other demonstration. The embarrassing [move] only reveals that [the orator] is uneducated and not fine, but does not reveal the contrary, whereas the demonstrative [move] does reveal the contrary, [that the orator] is entirely ignorant of justice, by establishing a contradiction.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Following *Meno* 97e-98a; the metaphor is based on the analogy of the runaway slave.

<sup>214</sup> Note the use of the verb ἀνατρέπω, which may relate to the fact that this was conventionally viewed as an anatreptic dialogue (one which trips up his opponent).

<sup>215</sup> The Aristotelian definition employed at the end of 1.13.

<sup>216</sup> W. identifies this with 460a5-461b2, yet this must be mistaken. The language at the beginning of 10.1 and the end of 10.3 confirms that 460a-461b is thought of as the demonstrative part of the refutation from Gorgias' answers. This starts at 459c8 (see 9.9), but at that stage is still eliciting premises. The refutation from facts (πράγματα) is not a matter of argument at all, but the demonstration of what Gorgias' pupils are like in practice.

<sup>217</sup> See below, 9.3, and 10.1-4.

In setting out the embarrassing [argument Socrates] employs a change of order. This is what I mean. Gorgias has said 'I speak before the mob' and also 'I am superior to individual craftsmen. That's how when my brother Herodicus could not persuade the sick man to take his medicine, I persuaded him'. We then ask him 'What? Are you better than a doctor?' He says 'No. I do not know medicine, but I persuaded him'. 'The doctor knew [medicine]? Yes or no?' He will say 'Yes'. 'Then you persuaded, [rather than] your brother, before the mob. And among the 'mob' you include the sick man himself, for if he had known the craft of medicine, he would have obeyed the doctor. So if you do not know medical science, Gorgias, and the doctor knows it, but you were more persuasive than him before the mob, i.e. among those who do not know, it is clearly to be concluded that, among those who do not know, someone who does not know is much more persuasive than someone who knows'.

9.3. That is how [Socrates] should have put it. But Socrates does not begin with a man who does not know—to prevent Gorgias giving up the encounter on the grounds that he is being insulted. Instead he begins with the mob, and then proceeds to the doctor's knowing, and only then to the man who does not know but did persuade. That is doubtless how he conducts the argument in establishing the premises, beginning with the mob; but in the summing up he begins with the one who does not know.<sup>218</sup> That is how the 'embarrassing' argument proceeds.

The demonstrative [mode of refutation] is as follows:<sup>219</sup> 'Do the orators who come to you come with knowledge of justice or without knowledge of it? If they come without knowledge of it, they need to be helped. But if they know it, do they themselves know what justice *actually is by nature*, while needing to learn what arguments to employ about it? Or do they know the arguments, but need to learn what justice is? If they know nothing and need to learn from you, teach them. If they know justice but not the arguments, teach them arguments. And if it is justice itself they need [to know about], teach them that. For it is necessary, above all, to know the subject-matter of one's craft. But as things are we

<sup>218</sup> The contrast is between 459a3-b1 and 459b1-3.

<sup>219</sup> It is difficult to know how this argument can be represented as Plato's, or as demonstrative, not least because the conclusions are imperatives. Socrates is seen as offering alternatives of which one must apply.

see that someone who comes to you learns nothing of it; for you imagine that justice is imposed in every case by convention, so that you don't compose your arguments about justice at all.' And although Gorgias concedes that 'we [orators] deal with justice', Polus becomes upset and says 'That was a bad thing, Gorgias, to include only justice, for we deal with injustice too'. We shall find out how [Socrates] refutes Polus when we come to that section.

9.4. **'Not teaching but persuading'** (458e7-459a1): Of course the teacher persuades too, but the teacher [couples persuasion] with understanding, while the false orator aims to do just this, namely to persuade. I say 'false', because [Plato] praises true rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* as well as in this dialogue.<sup>220</sup>

9.5. **'Doesn't 'in a mob' come to this'** (459a3-5): observe how he starts with the mob and not with a man who does not know.

9.6. **'Then the man who doesn't know'** (459b3): observe how now, in his conclusion, he begins with a man who does not know.

9.7. **'And doesn't that make it very easy'** (459c3): 'So it's a great pleasure not to be inferior to the craftsmen, even though one knows only one craft and has not studied the rest'. That is Gorgias' position. But note that intelligence is not without pleasure, nor is pleasure a fine thing in itself. [Pleasure] in isolation is an unseemly kind and aimed at vice, while [pleasure] that comes with reasoning is quite splendid. Furthermore, intelligence without pleasure is unappetizing. So it must possess a higher kind of pleasure.<sup>221</sup> That it does have is clear from the fact that we are pleased when we discover some deep point, so as to become absorbed in it or weep or sport the finest complexion.

9.8. **'If it's at all relevant to the discussion'** (459c7-8): i.e. 'if it will be useful to us to investigate what's outside the argument'.

9.9. **'Whether the orator is the same way about the just'** (459c8-d1): [Socrates] begins his demonstrative [refutation] by asking 'Does the orator actually deal with injustice and justice in the same way as the doctor and the other crafts do, not knowing what is good, bad, just and unjust, although it has the means to persuade on these topics in such a way as to seem to know without actually knowing? Or must he necessarily know them, and hence come to

<sup>220</sup> The references are to *Phdr.* 269c-272b, *Grg.* 517a.

<sup>221</sup> The desirability of the life combining both intellectual activity and suitable pleasure is of course a chief concern of *Phlb.* On pleasure see also 3.13 etc.

you with prior knowledge in order to study rhetoric? If you, the teacher of rhetoric, do not know [them], will you teach him nothing of these things—for that is not your job—but make him *seem* to know such things among the crowd? Or will you be completely unable to teach him, unless he first knows the truth about these things? Tell me simply how it is, and, in heaven's name, reveal for me all that rhetoric does, as you promised just now'.

9.10. **'Well, Socrates, I think'** (460a3): [Gorgias] carries on the conversation in an indecisive and cowardly fashion, and in an ignorant one too. Observe that he said 'I think', the mark of indecision, and 'If he should happen...', the mark of cowardice. For he attributes these things to chance, because he has no means of judging whether they know.

9.11. **'He will learn them also from me'** (460a4): observe his ignorance. For he is claiming 'I'll tell them these things as a side-issue'. And yet one should know the subject-matter of the craft under discussion before all else.

#### Lecture 10<sup>222</sup> (460a5-461b2)

10.1. **'Hold it there—you're speaking well'** (460a5): here the second refutation begins, the demonstrative one, I mean the one that reveals a contradiction in his account. Note that there are 'just', 'good', and 'fine', and that the good is spread over everything.<sup>223</sup> Plato allocates the discussion in a manner to suit each character. For some say that what is just is good and fine, others that it is fine but not good, and others again that it is neither good nor fine. Gorgias is a reasonable man and says that what is just is good and fine, whereas Polus says that it is fine but not good, and Callicles, who lives according to his own love of pleasure, says that it is neither good nor fine. Now Gorgias says that the orator is knowledgeable about what is just, whereas Polus does not grant this.

<sup>222</sup> In lecture 10 Ol. comments on the 'demonstrative' aspect of Socrates' elenchus of Gorgias. He focuses on whether a desire for just action is consequent upon being knowledgeable about justice.

<sup>223</sup> This is the late Neoplatonic doctrine, found also in Proclus (e.g. *In Prm.* 835.12-28, Siorvanes, 1996, 256) that the good is an influence at every metaphysical level, for which see above, 5.1 and note. For the odd term 'spread over' (ἐφίπλωται), cf. 0.3.

So [Socrates] begins in syllogistic fashion as follows: 'the orator is knowledgeable about justice'—Gorgias had admitted this at the beginning, though later he said that the orator puts his hand to both—'the orator, then, is knowledgeable about justice, someone who is knowledgeable about justice desires the just, someone who desires the just performs just acts, someone who performs just acts is not unjust, therefore the orator is not unjust'.

10.2. The first and last of these premises are granted, but the two in between are disputed. That the orator is knowledgeable about justice, Gorgias himself had granted. And that he who does just things is not unjust is granted by everyone. From what, then, does it follow that one who is knowledgeable about justice desires justice? Note that there are three kinds of justice [in people], one observed in belief, another in preference, and a third in knowledge.<sup>224</sup> An example of [that observed in] belief is when we judge for the most part that justice is fine, recognising only *that* it is so<sup>225</sup> and changing our minds often, for beliefs are shifting. An example of [that observed in] preference is when someone who is reasonable and desires to be just is forced many times to come to the doors of those who sit in judgement and they bid him to commit injustice. [That observed in] knowledge is knowing 'the that' and 'the why', when he can't change his colours and can never be convinced otherwise. For one with knowledge of justice knows its nature, and one who knows its nature will never forsake it but forever pursue it and embrace it, never engaging in wrongdoing voluntarily or involuntarily.

10.3. And since I have come to the voluntary, note that Plato says that all wrongdoing is involuntary.<sup>226</sup> What? Is there not also voluntary wrongdoing? We say there is. However, [Plato] says it is

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<sup>224</sup> This initially sounds strange, but one should remember that the virtues are regularly seen as knowledge or right opinion in the putatively early works of Plato. To these two possibilities, known best from *Prt.* and *Meno*, Ol. adds a third: a person is able to be called 'just' not only when he knows or correctly opines what is just but also when he has adopted a policy of justice even though he may be unable to carry it through.

<sup>225</sup> I.e. failing to recognize why it is so; cf. earlier on the distinction. Ol. reads *Meno* 97d-98a (which emphasizes the inconstancy of opinion) in the light of Aristotelian texts such as *An.Po.*, as is usual among later Platonists: cf. anon. *In Tht.* col. 3.

<sup>226</sup> Note that Plato himself is being credited with what we should regard as a typically Socratic thesis. Cf. also 27.7, 37.2; Orestes also figures prominently in the latter passage. See too Proc. *In Alc.* 104.8-21.

involuntary because in every case for wrongdoing to occur there is a need for a false premise, and the falsehood occurs in the major premise. For example, Orestes says 'My mother killed my father, every wife who kills her husband deserves to be killed, therefore my mother should be killed'. Observe that he goes wrong because of the major premise, for even if every killer should be killed, it is not by her own son. So it is because the premise is false that he is said to have committed injustice involuntarily. For we fall into falsehood involuntarily. For if we all desire the truth, no one seeks falsehood voluntarily.

Hence someone who is knowledgeable about justice desires justice because he knows the nature of it. And if in his knowledge he desires justice, it is evident that he will do it. Hence the syllogism runs well, and if so, the contradiction has been demonstrated.

10.4. 'For if the orator knows what is just, he will never commit injustice; but you said that he was also capable of committing injustice, which is absurd.' We need to attend to the order of the syllogism. For he said 'The orator is knowledgeable about justice'. Note that he starts with knowledge. Then he said 'Someone knowledgeable about justice desires justice'. Observe how the disposition comes second, for desiring belongs to one's disposition. Then he says 'Someone who desires justice, does it', indicating the activity. In inferring 'Someone who acts justly never commits injustice' he states the privation. So the order is significant. For first there is knowledge, then comes disposition, activity, and finally privation.<sup>227</sup>

By what notion did Gorgias come to say both that the orator is knowledgeable about justice and also that he is capable of committing injustice? We say that he grasped the former from the common notion, while he thinks the latter because of ignorance.<sup>228</sup> So Gorgias was led from the one to the other and fell into contradiction.

10.5. It is worth inquiring why the doctor who transgresses his oath and dispenses harmful things is not is not accused of being a

<sup>227</sup> Ol. implies that the order reflects some kind of metaphysical descent, from form to formlessness, perhaps, yet it is unclear whether there is any established doctrine behind his claims.

<sup>228</sup> The common notion that Gorgias' concession (that the orator is knowledgeable about justice) rests on is that each craft seeks knowledge of its subject-matter (11.2).



non-doctor,<sup>229</sup> but is a doctor all the same, while the orator who concerns himself with injustice has his credentials questioned. We say that the doctor deals with the body, but not in every case, because he is concerned for the soul too. But justice belongs to the soul. And what is more valuable than soul? So we should not betray the interests of the soul.<sup>230</sup>

Note that it is possible to make a deduction from the contrary premise and say: 'the orator is knowledgeable about injustice, one who is knowledgeable about injustice desires what is unjust, one who desires what is unjust does what is unjust, one who does what is unjust is never just, therefore the orator is never just'. But we say it is not in order to use it that the orator is able to understand injustice,<sup>231</sup> but so as to avoid it and not fall into it through ignorance.

10.6. **'That was why I was surprised and thought'** (461a1-2): observe how after the refutation Socrates offers neither an insulting nor an attacking word, as someone else probably would in a moment of elation. He only says 'I was surprised'.

10.7. **'By the dog, Gorgias'** (461a7-b1): this is symbolic, for the dog is the symbol of the life of reason, as he says in the *Republic* (375e-376b): 'There is something philosophical about the dog, its discriminating faculty, for it discriminates between the familiar and the strange. That is surely why it puts up with being beaten by those with whom it is familiar, but not at all by strangers, but is aroused to anger'. It is because the life of reason distinguishes what is fine from what is base, that he spoke symbolically of this life by means of the word 'dog'. Furthermore, it was because Socrates distinguished by the demonstrative method what Gorgias got confused over, that he referred to the dog.<sup>232</sup>

10.8. **'To investigate adequately'** (461a5): the [part of the discussion] concerning Gorgias is completed at this point.

10.9. **'When we examine the question'** (461a5): observe how he makes the investigation a joint one.

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<sup>229</sup> Cf. 9.2.

<sup>230</sup> Reading οὐ πάντως <δέ>, ὅτι at 63.15W: for if the argument is not strangely elliptical, then the text is deficient, and this is the minimum correction to yield good sense.

<sup>231</sup> We adopt W.'s correction; the text has 'justice'.

<sup>232</sup> Compare Hermias *In Phdr.* 26.4-6, where other reasons are given for swearing by the dog.

**Lecture 11<sup>233</sup> (461b3-462b10)**

11.1. 'What, Socrates?' (461b3): it is the task of a man of understanding to eliminate the false apprehensions that disturb the soul like noxious humours and to outline the real creative cause of those things each [such expert] makes his subject-matter. So here too [Socrates] demonstrates what is not the creative cause of constitutional well-being, namely that it is not rhetoric, and then he introduces what *is* the cause. For it was necessary first to say what it is not, and thereafter what it is.

That it is not rhetoric, he has shown by the following syllogisms: 'According to Gorgias an orator is knowledgeable about justice, and also according to Gorgias an orator has the power to commit injustice, therefore someone who is knowledgeable has the power to commit injustice'. The conclusion is particular, since it is in the third figure. Then the conclusion of this syllogism becomes the starting-point for a second syllogism in the first figure, as follows: 'Someone who is knowledgeable has the power to commit injustice, [all] those with the power to commit injustice are not knowledgeable, therefore someone who is knowledgeable is not knowledgeable, which is absurd'.<sup>234</sup>

11.2. After this discussion, Polus does not agree with the premise drawn by Gorgias from the common notions, the one which says that the orator is knowledgeable about justice—for the common notion is that each craft will know its own subject-matter—and he commits himself to the other premise, the one wrongly granted by Gorgias, that the orator has the power also to commit injustice and on the basis of this he wishes to overturn the argument.<sup>235</sup>

And in general note that the creator has these three features: goodness, as indeed the poets testify, saying 'The gods are granters

<sup>233</sup> In lecture 11, Ol. recalls how Gorgias had been refuted, and notes how Polus tries to do better by denying a premise which Gorgias had admitted. Ol. identifies three good qualities belonging to the 'ideal' orator on the basis of the common notions: goodness, power and knowledge. Of these qualities, which are also attributed to God, Polus allegedly fails to attribute knowledge to the orator, while Callicles will also omit power. Ol. also comments at length on lessons in philosophic method.

<sup>234</sup> The first syllogism (3rd fig.) is a condensed version of the argument against Gorgias, set out at 10.1: all R are Kj, all R are Ci (more charitably: there exists some R who is Ci), hence some Kj are Ci. The second (1st fig.) runs: Some Kj are Ci, all Ci are ~Kj, hence some Kj are ~Kj.

<sup>235</sup> On Polus being closer to the common notions than Callicles, see 25.1.

of good things'; and knowledge, whence it is said 'The gods know all things', and power, since 'The gods have power over all'.<sup>236</sup> So it is possible to refute those who say that God had the power to produce evil, but did not wish it—or else the world would be destructible.<sup>237</sup> Note, you see, that evil comes not from power, but from lack of power. So if God does not possess lack of power, how did he have the power to produce evil? They say: 'Why is the world not destructible, then?' Because God is good, and what is good contains no envy concerning anything. Besides, there are actualities there that are not linked with potencies (powers).<sup>238</sup>

Note then that Gorgias, who is almost the complete [orator], claims the three [features] for rhetoric. For he says that the orator is good (hence he said concerning himself 'I am a good orator'), that [he has] power (for he said that he has the power to commit injustice), and also that [he has] knowledge (for he said that the orator is knowledgeable about justice).

11.3. But Polus, who is less complete, agrees with his goodness and power, but not with his knowledge. And Callicles agrees with his goodness alone, regarding all that is good, in accordance with his pleasure-loving nature, as pleasure and all pleasure as good.<sup>239</sup> How [Socrates] will refute him, we shall learn.

Note that [Socrates] is now directing the argument towards Polus. For Polus said 'You, Socrates, handled the questioning of Gorgias maliciously, so that he blushed and wrongly conceded

<sup>236</sup> These features of the creator, derived from Homer *Od.* 8.325 (cf. Hes. *Th.* 46), 4.379, 10.306, are emphasized by Alexandrian Neoplatonism.

<sup>237</sup> Ol. rejects attempts to defend divine omnipotence which rely on divine goodwill to reject evil, and preserve divine credit for good works by assuming the possibility that he could have acted otherwise. No opponents are here specified, but it seems natural to think of these remarks as being directed against Christians rather than rival philosophers.

<sup>238</sup> On God's lacking the power to create evil (cf. 15.3 below, El. *In Isag.* 16.26-35, Ascl. *In Met.* 144.26-34), Ol. exploits the full range of the the meaning of the word *dynamis* (power, capacity, ability, potency). Proclus also claims that the power for evil was really impotence (*In Tim.* 1.19.20-21, *Mal.* 48.16-18, 54.1). The denial of divine envy derives from *Tim.* 29e1-2. The rejection of anything less than actuality in the divine relates rather to Arist. *Met.* A.

<sup>239</sup> Ol.'s liking for discovering schematic differences between interlocutors is perhaps misleading him here. It seems strange that Callicles should not be held to attribute power to the orator when he clearly sees rhetoric as a tool to be employed by his ideal persons, who are both up to the task (ἱκανός, 484a) and shrewd (φρόνιμος, 491b); yet Callicles is later happy to admit that contemporary Athenian users of political oratory do not have those qualities which would make them either wise or powerful in the eyes of either 'Socrates' or Ol. (502d-503b).

that [the orator] is knowledgeable about justice, and his shame damaged his case, as the poet says "Shame, that brings men great harm".<sup>240</sup> I, however, maintain that [the orator] has the power to commit injustice'. Socrates does not respond harshly to this, but he knew that, just as in a single soul there are higher features, the good ones, and lower features, the passions, so too in Polus the passions are at their peak. So he imitates the higher goods, turns Polus towards himself and soothes his passions.<sup>241</sup> For he says 'Polus, the reason we have sons and acquire comrades is so that they will remember us in later days when we grow old. So you do the right thing in turning back and recontesting the premises'. (For 'withdrawing a postulate' [in the Platonic text] means recontesting the premises.<sup>242</sup> For the premise is a postulate, as indeed the definition of the syllogism shows when it says 'a syllogism is that in which, when certain things have been postulated, something else of necessity follows').<sup>243</sup> 'Therefore let us grapple with the premises from the beginning; do challenge whatever you wish, granting me one favour only, that you cease from theatrical and extended discourse, and conduct the discussion, as Gorgias did, by question and answer.'

To this Polus answers: 'What? May I not speak at greater length?' Once again Socrates responds gently: 'It would be a disgrace, when the Athenians of all the Greeks encourage speaking at length, if I should prevent you from speaking when visiting Athens. However, although you are free to speak at length, I shall not listen to you.' [Socrates] is speaking riddlingly and rebuking the Athenians for wasting the whole year in the courts through their love of litigation. So too the comic dramatists criticised the Athenians, saying 'cicadas sing for two or three months, but the Athenians argue law-cases all year long'.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>240</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.44-45; Hes. *Op.* 318.

<sup>241</sup> I.e. Socrates performs the tasks that the higher goods within Polus' own soul would be doing if they were strong enough.

<sup>242</sup> That ἀναπαλαίω ταῖς προτάσεσι (recontest the premises) had indeed become logical terminology is assured by Proc. *In Alc.* 252.5-9 on *Alc.* 110d, and Steph. *In De Int.* 2.28-31 who refers, it seems, to this passage of *Grg.* under the impression that it is Calicles who is the interlocutor.

<sup>243</sup> Predictably an Aristotelian definition, *An.Pr.* 1.1 24b18-20, *Top.* 1.1 100a25-27.

<sup>244</sup> A political lesson, backed up with a quotation from Aristophanes, *Birds* 39-41.

11.4. So he says to Polus: 'If you want to engage in discussion, either ask questions and I shall answer, or let me ask questions'. He does this because he has confidence in demonstrations. But [Polus] thinks that the questioner is in a stronger position than the answerer and rushes to be the questioner. He does not realize that if the answerer proves ignorant, he is excused, because the questioner has not properly distinguished ambiguous terms or such like, whereas if the questioner stumbles, he is not excused, if he cannot introduce appropriate questions.

For instance this fellow Polus also asks poor questions. For he urges Socrates to answer [the question] what rhetoric is, and yet Socrates does not profess rhetoric. Nevertheless Socrates answers philosophically. For the 'What is it?' is apprehended both in a genus (e.g. when we say 'what is man?', seeking simply to get the answer 'animal') and also in a definition (e.g. when we seek to get an answer in terms of genus and differentia, such as 'rational mortal animal'). So [Socrates] says to him 'What is it you are asking me? Do you want me to tell you that it is a craft or that it is a craft of a certain sort?' Now we shall learn in another lecture<sup>245</sup> that one [kind of rhetoric] is a craft, and another [kind] is experience, and that this experience is both capable of being a craft and also is not [a craft].

11.5. '**Perhaps from that agreement**' (461b8): he says 'perhaps' because he does not wish to concede defeat, wavering and saying 'Perhaps from this admission there followed a certain contradiction'. And again by saying 'a certain contradiction' he belittles the argument and regards it as of no account. 'This occurred when you improperly introduced the terms you did; for who is not ashamed to say "I am not knowledgeable about just things"? It was because he experienced this that Gorgias agreed. So it is bad manners to bring the argument to this.'

11.6. '**Finest Polus**' (461c5): he calls him finest, since [Polus] delights in the beauty of form and loves balanced and rhyming phrases.

11.7. '**If you restrain**' (461d6): shutting in, like a wild beast, his long-windedness and theatrical exposition.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> In fact the next, 12.1 ff. 'Lecture' translates *theoria*.

<sup>246</sup> This is a pertinent comment on Plato's verb, which suggests bringing a creature of the wilds into civilized captivity. Thus Polus' rhetoric is represented as belonging to 'nature'.

11.8. **'Indeed it would be hard on you'** (461e1): 'if when you go off among the Athenians you receive the freedom to speak, you would be very hard done by if you were alone here and not [able to] speak. So you possess the freedom to speak, but I shall not listen. For I too possess this freedom'.

11.9. **'Examine and be examined'** (462a4-5): note again, even from the order of his words,<sup>247</sup> the fair-minded character of the philosopher.

11.10. **'For I take it you also say'** (462a5): we should not conduct discussions with just anyone. That is the reason he says 'You are not just anyone, for you say that you too know what Gorgias knows, so that I will hold the discussion with you.'

11.11. **'And don't you also tell'** (462a8): 'Don't you also bid anyone to question you, so you can answer whatever anyone seeks?'

11.12. **'Now answer me'** (462b3): note how he jumps at the chance to ask the questions.

11.13. **'Are you asking'** (462b6): note how Socrates specifies the 'What is it?' and asks 'Are you asking me what rhetoric is or what craft it is?' Polus says 'Yes, what sort of craft it is'. Socrates says 'To tell you the truth, it seems to me no craft at all'.

## Lecture 12<sup>248</sup> (462b11-463a5)

12.1. **'A thing which you say has produced'** (462b11): when Polus said 'Tell me, Socrates, what is rhetoric?', [Socrates] supplemented one question with another (462b6), and said that it is not a craft.<sup>249</sup>

Let us investigate so that we may know in what sense [rhetoric] is a craft and in what sense it is not.<sup>250</sup> For there are arguments in

<sup>247</sup> I.e. from inviting Polus *first* to refute, *then* to be refuted.

<sup>248</sup> In lecture 12, Ol. displays an ambivalent attitude towards rhetoric: he gives reasons for believing that it is a craft before going on to reasons why it should not be one. He makes considerable use of Hellenistic philosophy and medicine—this lecture is an important source for Stoic views of craft—and argues that while rhetoric conforms with Stoic requirements for a craft, it falls short of Socratic, Platonic or Aristotelian demands. Ol.'s explanation of Socrates' concept of 'popular' rhetoric (and the connection between rhetoric and pleasure) reveals some discomfort about the close connexion Socrates sees between a practice aiming at pleasure (i.e. a flattery) and one cognitively grounded in experience alone. Ol. criticizes Polus for poor tactics and bad logic, and is perhaps more scornful of Polus than Plato's text requires.

<sup>249</sup> W. postulates a lacuna, comparing 11.13 and *Grg.* 462b6-9. We believe this to be unnecessary.

<sup>250</sup> Unlike W. we place a comma after οὐ.

favour of the view that it is a craft, and arguments against it. Those in favour of it are these: we must state the definitions of a craft, and if they fit rhetoric it will be clear that it is a craft. Cleanthes, then, says a craft is 'A disposition to accomplish methodically all it tackles'.<sup>251</sup> But this definition is incomplete, for nature is also a disposition to do methodically all it does. Accordingly Chrysippus, adding 'with impressions',<sup>252</sup> said 'A craft is a disposition to proceed methodically together with impressions'.

Rhetoric, then, comes under this definition, for it is a disposition, and it proceeds with method and order. Surely that is why an orator first employs an introduction, then the preliminary plea, then the establishment of the case and so on, delighting in order.<sup>253</sup> But Zeno says 'A craft is a systematic set of cognitive acts coordinated with a view to some useful goal in life'. So rhetoric also falls within this definition too, for it involves system, cognition and coordination, and it aims at some useful goal: for orators go on embassies for cities and the like, such as Demosthenes, Python,<sup>254</sup> Aeschines and so on. Hence it is a craft.

12.2. We say that if crafts are characterised according to these principles, [rhetoric] is a craft. But if we add that a craft will also involve knowledge of its subject-matter and supply calculations and causes<sup>255</sup> for what it does, then [rhetoric] is not a craft. For it neither knows what is just, nor does it supply causes, and as Plato himself also says, 'Whatever matter is without a rational account is

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<sup>251</sup> Long and Sedley (1987) 42A: for this definition of *technē* as a *hexis*, cf. 2.2. But here we have Cleanthes and Zeno as well as Chrysippus. In fact the attempt to attribute the three definitions to the three successive early scholars may be misguided, as Long and Sedley argue. Note how Ol. here relies purely on the Stoics for the positive side of the case, and purely on *Grg.* for the opposing one. He cannot bring in *Phdr.*, because he sees that as referring to a higher rhetoric, not the popular rhetoric dismissed here.

<sup>252</sup> The 'impression' (φαντασία) is the form in which cognitive material first presents itself to the mind in Stoic epistemology. Chrysippus is seen by Ol. as applying the Aristotelian distinction between the agency of craft and the agency of nature, regarding the latter as independent of the attempt to discover truths about how it should act. See on the Chrysippus material and other Stoic definitions Mansfeld (1983).

<sup>253</sup> The organization of a speech again (cf. 2.2), this time with προκατάστασις added.

<sup>254</sup> For Python, see note on 1.13.

<sup>255</sup> Possibly an allusion to *Meno* 98a, but separating out the notions of calculation and cause (or 'reason') in the manner of *Tim.* 33ab. Note that *logismos* ('calculation') does not occur in this connexion in *Grg.*, and that it is *logos* which is missing from non-crafts at 465a.

not called a craft'. That is surely why a doctor also possesses a craft, assuming that he knows how to give a rational account, whereas the empirical practitioner, his assistant for example or someone else who knows how to handle things in practice, does not also possess [a craft], since he does not supply a cause.<sup>256</sup>

But the orator does not even have understanding of the arguments<sup>257</sup> for what he is anxious to persuade us of, and even if he did understand them, they were not end-related but means-related.<sup>258</sup> Furthermore, this persuasion is not just but unjust.<sup>259</sup> Besides, a craft requires an inflexible rule, through which it safeguards its subject matter, whereas rhetoric corrupts its own proper rule.<sup>260</sup> Its rule is the juryman, so it is concerned to deceive him with pleas for mercy.<sup>261</sup> In the same way it transgresses the laws by distinguishing its literal meaning from its intent, saying 'The intent of the law is different....'

12.3. Hence [rhetoric] both is and is not a craft. Since Socrates presents his definition of rhetoric a little at a time,<sup>262</sup> we must tie together the threads, and set it out like this: there are these three

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<sup>256</sup> We believe that Ol. is here taking it for granted that the debate between empirical and 'rationalist' medical 'schools' mirrors the Platonic distinction between crafts and non-crafts, cf. 2.3 above. The influence of Galen (who frequently alludes to *Meno* 98a) can probably be assumed.

<sup>257</sup> There is an ambiguity here, since rhetoric is concerned with λόγοι in the sense of 'argument' whereas other crafts are only concerned with them in the less technical sense of 'reasons'; however *Grg.* 449e ff. treats the term as univocal while recognizing both areas of application.

<sup>258</sup> Ol. is not claiming that the arguments will themselves be the goal of true rhetoric, but rather that the ordinary rhetor *at best* knows arguments for how some supposed 'end' should be achieved, not for whether it is a desirable end at all. The key passage of *Grg.* is here 501a-c (cf. 465a). Note that Ol. is rather more willing than Socrates to admit that rhetoric may have *some* legitimate theoretical basis.

<sup>259</sup> Presumably this refers only to what is called 'rhetorical persuasion' at 454e, though *πειθώ* is frequently used in the derogatory sense of 'seduction'.

<sup>260</sup> One wonders what the 'proper rule' (κανὼν) of true arts like medicine and law-giving are, and whether they can be either human or abstract (e.g. the Hippocratic oath). It seems that Ol. himself is making a rhetorical point rather than one grounded in theory.

<sup>261</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 1354a24 (though Ol.'s interest in *Rhet.* and willingness to take it into account is seldom obvious). Ol. perhaps also has in mind *Ap.* 34b-35d, where Socrates rejects such pleas, regarding them as an unjust invitation to the juryman to vote unjustly. W. compares Hermog. *Stat.* 9 and S.E. *Math.* 2.36.

<sup>262</sup> The end of 12.3 shows that Ol. is talking of scattered material within *Grg.*, not from various dialogues, but this makes his trichotomy harder to justify.



things, understanding, craft, experience. Now *understanding* differs from craft in its subject-matter, because eternal and unfailing things like geometry are its subject, whereas *craft* deals with things in flux that change from moment to moment, and for this reason crafts are concerned with what is so for the most part. Again, craft differs from *experience* in that craft, like understanding too, supplies causes, while experience does not.<sup>263</sup>

This being so, note that aptitude is something in the soul, and it is called *aptitude* because of our *being adapted* for carrying out a particular task.<sup>264</sup> Note that the soul possesses two [kinds of] faculties, one cognitive and the other life-supporting and appetitive.<sup>265</sup> The cognitive ones are intelligence, thinking, belief, imagination and sensation, the appetitive ones passion, desire and will.<sup>266</sup> Experience is investigated under the heading of cognition, flattery under that of life. If one of these, flattery and experience, fell under the other, it would be fine for us to tackle them both together: e.g. man falls under animal and substance, since animal too is substance. But seeing that they are quite different, how can we take them together? It is quite clear that they do not fall under the same genus. For not every case of experience is also flattery—look how the empirical doctor uses both incisions and burns, without any flattery in view. Nor is the flatterer [always] a person of experience—for example it's because he is operating without experience that he occasionally incurs hatred and is expelled.<sup>267</sup>

There is a remarkable lesson to be learnt here, that a friend is as superior to a flatterer as the good is to the pleasant! A friend who aims at the good, you see, also has the courage to cause pain, whereas the flatterer with his eyes fixed on pleasure harms those who come close to him.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Compare these distinctions with 2.4 above. Note that Ol. introduces a threefold distinction to replace Socrates' twofold one.

<sup>264</sup> Ἐπιτήδευσις (Plato's term at 462e3), it is claimed, is derived from ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν. There is no adequate translation here. The noun is glossed as δύνάμις (power, faculty) below, though regularly translated 'practice', which is not at all suggestive of a faculty.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. 13.1: 'appetitive' is just a gloss on 'life-supporting', and is later dropped.

<sup>266</sup> The inspiration behind this Alexandrian classification of faculties is mostly Aristotelian; cf. Philop. *In De An.* 1.10-15, 5.34-6.1 etc.

<sup>267</sup> A non-Socratic contrast between flattery and experience (which comes close to denying something implied in *Grg.*), stemming from Ol.'s division of faculties.

<sup>268</sup> W. refers us here to Arist. *EN* 10.3 (not 2 as he says) 1173b31-74a1,

Now flattery is seen to concern either the soul or the body. When it is concerned with the body, what results is fancy cooking and cosmetics—for a man who bakes delicacies plays the flatterer by offering pleasure to the eater, even if it is harmful. In the same way too cosmetics [flatters] by preserving the beauty of one's hair. But when it is concerned with the soul, [flattery] results in sophistic and rhetoric. Now if part of constitutional craft is concerned with the administration of law, and part concerned with judging, the administration of law resembles gymnastics, since it preserves laws properly passed, just as gymnastics preserves health. Justice, on the other hand, resembles medicine, since it sets right what is in error just as medicine brings into line with nature what is contrary to it. Note therefore that sophistic adopts the guise of the administration of law, and rhetoric that of judging. So we can bring the threads together and say 'Rhetoric is "experience" in flattery concerned with the soul, an image of the judicial part of constitutional craft'.<sup>269</sup> I say this of the popular kind of rhetoric. For *true rhetoric*, which is subordinate to the statesman, is divine, and one cannot get it right without first studying philosophy.

12.4. 'A thing which you say' (462b11): after Polus has said 'After the genus of rhetoric, which is "craft", state the differentiae', Socrates says 'I have not stated its genus, for I do not say that rhetoric is a craft, but rather a [knack based on] experience'. Looking not for conflict but for the truth, Socrates does not declare in straight opposition that it is a matter of experience, but says 'Rhetoric is a thing which you say...'. For Polus, as we learnt above, used the word 'experience', saying 'Experience causes life to proceed in accordance with craft' (448c5-6). For if experience is a creative cause of craft and a cause is better than its product, then we must call

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influenced by the fact that this passage seems to be behind 14.2, where Aristotle is named. But the context shows that Aristotle is only employing a notion that has become commonplace since *Grg*. In fact 14.2 may be citing a work now lost, as Ol. attributes to Aristotle more than could possibly be paralleled in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The difference between the flatterer and the friend (the latter of whom does not appear in relevant sections of *Grg*.) had become a commonplace philosophical topos. Plutarch, for instance has an essay on it. The current theme is touched upon at *Mor.* 51b, 55a (where *Grg.* is in mind) and 55d; but Plutarch is on the whole little conscious of fourth century thought in this essay. But again cf. 14.2 where Ol. explicitly refers to Aristotle on this theme.

<sup>269</sup> Here we have a comprehensive definition of rhetoric as conceived by Socrates, assembled from material at 462c3, 463b1, and 463d1-2.

rhetoric 'experience', a [particular kind of] experience.<sup>270</sup> For fancy cooking and cosmetics are kinds of experience, but they are not of the same kind. Experience then is concerned with gratification and pleasure, for rhetoric gratifies people with things that are pleasant. That is also how fancy cooking and cosmetics also turn out—these kinds of experience also provide the gratification of pleasure.

Rhetoric provides the kind of pleasure which aims at vice, not genuine [pleasure]. For this latter accompanies intelligence. Our life is a mixture of intelligence and pleasure. As I have said (9.7), intelligence should not be by itself, without sweetness, nor should pleasure be without intelligence. Hence because we are pleased when we are in an unimpeded condition, the greater the lack of impediment, the more we are pleased.<sup>271</sup> Hence because intelligence, being independent of matter, is totally unimpeded, it always has pleasure pure and simple.

So rhetoric aims at pleasure. But if someone says 'Well, Demosthenes criticizes those who aim at pleasure and asks "What do you want? What am I to write? How am I to do you a favour?"',<sup>272</sup> answer that the passions are many. There is the passion for ambition, the passion for flattery, and the passion for indulgence. Even if Demosthenes did not have the passion for flattering, he certainly succumbed to the pleasure of ambition. But then again, how can we avoid calling him a flatterer when he practised under democracy, neglecting aristocracy?<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Ol. is now giving Polus' reasoning, not Socrates'. For 3.2 informs us that experience is not the creative cause of craft.

<sup>271</sup> Aristotelian theory of a pleasure as an unimpeded activity, *EN* 7.13. W. also compares here Dam. *In Phlb.* 87, where the unimpeded nature of noetic activity is implied. This goes slightly beyond anything which Aristotle is prepared to say in *EN* 10.7 where the pleasure of the life of intelligence is praised for its ability to continue uninterrupted, its self-sufficiency and its purity. How far one thinks that Aristotle would have seen such activity as free of matter may depend upon one's view of *De An.* 3.5. However, it is not difficult for the Neoplatonist mind to assume that this is because of its supposed freedom from the obstructions imposed on physical activities by the intractable nature of matter.

<sup>272</sup> Dem. 3.22, a favourite Olympiodoran passage; compare 1.3 above.

<sup>273</sup> Since aristocracy means the rule of the best, to neglect aristocracy would be to put something else (i.e. pleasure) before what is best. Cf. 2.4, 32.3-5, 41.2. Yet Dem. is usually seen as an orator of intermediate status (1.13, 31.3), not as a flatterer.

Socrates uses the two terms, saying 'of gratification and pleasure'.<sup>274</sup> But Polus in a mischievous and uneducated way passes by 'pleasure', and takes up 'gratification', and he argues through a syllogism that 'Rhetoric gratifies, all that gratifies is good, therefore rhetoric is a good thing'. He acts wrongly first in adopting the minor premise. Then again he stretches a point in adopting the major premise—which says that everything which gratifies is a fine thing—since Socrates has not granted it and Polus himself has not established it. And again he allows his logic to go astray. For Socrates had said 'rhetoric is experience', and 'fancy cooking is experience', and [Polus] infers that rhetoric is fancy cooking, which is a syllogism in the second figure from two affirmatives, not appreciating that things classified under the same heading are not straightaway also identical. For it is not the case that, since man and horse come under the same [heading], man and horse are straightaway identical. And so neither are cooking and rhetoric the same thing, even though they are both kinds of experience.

12.5. **'In the work'** (462b11): if you remember, we said that Polus did not improvise his earlier phrases, but was in the position of having composed and practised them before. So [Socrates] speaks riddlingly when he says 'I recently came across your volume'.<sup>275</sup>

12.6. **'Unless you say something else'** (462c5): you [can] see that the discussion is concerned with popular rhetoric. For he says 'Yes, I call it experience, unless you are referring to something else', i.e. 'Unless you are discussing true rhetoric'.

12.7. **'Ask me now'** (462d8): he encourages him to ask questions, and it is Socrates who tells him which questions he ought to be addressing to Socrates himself! Observe how he wanted earlier to lead the discussion and did not think it right that he should be asked, but now he is unable even to ask the questions, but gets the questions to ask from Socrates.

12.8. **'Then what? Tell me'** (462d10): this is Socrates, who says 'Say to me Polus, "Well what is it?"'<sup>276</sup>

<sup>274</sup> The text is uncertain: we read καὶ ἡδονῆς for ἔχει ἡδονήν, influenced by Plato's text and the genitive at 74.12.

<sup>275</sup> The implication is that Polus' earlier piece of epideictic (see 3.2) had been straight from his book. This is a rare case of Ol. suspecting Socratic irony.

<sup>276</sup> Ol. differs from modern editors here, through his low view of Polus, in assigning these words to Socrates. For notes on who speaks see on 3.6.

12.9. **'Then cookery is the same'** (462e2): observe his erroneous conclusion. For it is not the same even if it is a part of the same aptitude, i.e. of experience.

12.10. **'A bit ill-bred'** (462e6): Callicles, because he suffers from every failing of reason, does not blush, but in Socrates' presence insults philosophy, as we shall learn; Socrates, however, is godlike and does not take that line, but on account of Gorgias' love of learning says 'It is boorish to slander rhetoric in Gorgias' presence, since I do not know what kind he professes, and he will think that I am making a mockery of his own field. So what he professes, I do not know. But there is a rhetoric which is a part of nothing that is fine,<sup>277</sup> because it's base.' For what is fine depends on what is good and upon form. Indeed we call even the less beautiful forms 'base'.

'The basest man to come to Troy.'<sup>278</sup>

12.11. Since we have passed a phrase by, let me explain it.<sup>279</sup> **'What's that, Polus? Have you already found out'** (462c10): although it has not yet been shown *what* rhetoric is, Polus asks *what sort* of thing it is. So [Socrates] criticizes him for asking something else when this had not been explained. And from this the correct order of the four 'problems' emerges.

12.12. **'A part of what, Socrates?'** (463a5): 'Tell me which of the things that are not fine is it a part of, Socrates'.

### Lecture 13<sup>280</sup> (463a6-466a3)

13.1. **'Well, Gorgias, I think'** (463a6): here Socrates wants to give the general definition of rhetoric. So he takes two genera, one specific, the other more remote. For just as there are two genera of man, one more specific, such as animal, the other more remote,

<sup>277</sup> Reading τις ῥητορικὴ rather than ἡ ῥητορικὴ. It would be unusual for Ol. to allow this statement of Plato's about one kind of rhetoric to apply to rhetoric as a whole.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. above, 5.1. Homer *Il.* 2.216, cited there too as an instance of the use of 'base' which implies no more than an absence of fine qualities.

<sup>279</sup> The lecturer's habit of returning to a point omitted earlier. Cf. 13.10, 41.10, (43.3: he goes back to answer a query), 46.1-2 (notes needing to be added), 48.10.

<sup>280</sup> In lecture 13 Ol. comments on Socrates' characterization of rhetoric as a species of flattery. He sets out a division, which results in the isolation of rhetorical practice.

such as substance, similarly in the case of rhetoric, its specific [genus] is flattery and its remote [genus] is aptitude. Note that the flatterer needs to possess three things, guesswork, shrewdness and courage: *guesswork* so that he can estimate the nature of the person being flattered, establishing devices that please him so that he can use them; *shrewdness* so that he knows the ways by which he ought to resort to flattery; *courage* so that he stands firm and does not give ground after using vain conceits, for it is thus that he is detected.<sup>281</sup>

Since there are many [kinds of] flattery, we need to say what kind of flattery rhetoric is. If we are going to discover this, we need to grasp the subject-matter available to flatterers and the dispositions through which we approach it. Note that aptitude is of two kinds, one cognitive, the other aiming at life.<sup>282</sup> And the cognitive [type] either supplies causes or does not, and what supplies causes is either about what is eternal and always the same or about what is changing. But that concerned with what is always the same is called scientific understanding, that concerned with what is changing is craft, while that which does not supply causes is experience.

Again, an investigation of life concerns either body or soul—concerning the body either its good or its pleasure [is investigated], and likewise concerning the soul. And concerning the body either what preserves it in health, or restores it if sick.<sup>283</sup> And the restoration is the good aimed at by medicine, while the preservation [is the good aimed at] by gymnastic.

13.2. That the doctor does not preserve our health is evident from the name, for medication is a name rather like remediation.<sup>284</sup> So do not think that because they now overlap gymnastics and medicine are the same. With respect to the soul what preserves it is the administration of law, while what restores it is the passing of judgement, these two [processes] being subsumed under the heading 'constitutional'. On the other hand, there is no genus

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<sup>281</sup> Cf 13.10. It is interesting that Ol. does not find anything strange in attributing the virtue of courage to the rhetorician (contrast Irwin, p. 132), nor does he find it necessary to refer to the disputed parallel with Isocrates *c. Soph.* 17 (refs. in Dodds, 1959, 225).

<sup>282</sup> Cf 12.3, which is in fact a division of faculties, cognitive, and animative + appetitive. The division of aptitude appears to follow that of faculties.

<sup>283</sup> One should perhaps read τὸ for τῷ twice at p. 77.10.

<sup>284</sup> I.e. ἱατρική is an ἱατρική.

common to gymnastic and medicine, because these two, gymnastic and medicine, are concerned with the body, and this is in parts and does not have unity, whereas the administration of law and justice are concerned with the soul, which is without parts and unitary and causes things applying to it to admit a common genus.<sup>285</sup>

What, then, are the dispositions that resemble these and look to the apparent good, which is the pleasant? For each passion comes from a falling short, though it adopts the guise of the good. So cosmetics impersonates gymnastics, for this too preserves the current beauty of the hair by adding alien colours. And cookery impersonates medicine, for this too stimulates appetite, but does so with a view to pleasure, and often it gives one part, e.g. the tip of the tongue, an appetite, while overthrowing the whole body. Furthermore, with respect to the soul sophistry impersonates the administration of law, because it too is concerned with the universal—hence Protagoras sophistically argues that nothing is false, but everything true, and that perception is knowledge<sup>286</sup>—whereas rhetoric impersonates justice because it is concerned with the particular. Hence *rhetoric is an experiential aptitude which flatters the soul*, an image of the judicial part of constitutional craft—‘the judicial [part]’ is added because there exists also the legislative [part], ‘the soul’ [is added] to contrast with the body, and ‘flatters’ [is added] to contrast with the good.<sup>287</sup>

13.3. **‘It seems to be a craft’** (463b3): of course we still say ‘The cook is a craftsman’ today.

13.4. **‘That would not be just, Polus’** (463c6): just as the question of justice arises in actions, so also in speech. [Socrates] is saying that it is not just to seek what qualities a thing has before learning what it is.<sup>288</sup>

13.5. **‘Then would you understand if I answered?’** (463d1): Socrates replies somewhat unclearly on purpose, wishing to

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<sup>285</sup> Apparently it is not necessary that there be a common genus of things to do with the body because it is a divisible entity: one might suggest that there need be no common genus to cover all aspects of automobile maintenance, that would include both automotive electronics and automotive upholstery.

<sup>286</sup> Ol. appears to be forming his impression of Protagoras from Plato’s *Thl.* 152a8 ff., and *Euthd.* 286bc.

<sup>287</sup> Ol.’s final definition of rhetoric, modifying that given at 12.3.

<sup>288</sup> Ol. here interprets his familiar observation of procedural impropriety as injustice.

discover whether Polus has been benefited at all, but the latter is found to have made no improvement.

13.6. **'I say it is shameful'** (463d4): there are various cures for the passions, among which is also this one—giving in to the passions so that then satiety brings them to a stop. We do this often with immoderate laughter. Because, then, Polus is overcome by the passion to ask what qualities a thing has instead of what it is, Socrates yields to him and says that it is shameful, satisfying the other's question.

We must understand that there are these three, *the good, the just, and the fine*. And these coincide in the case of actions but not in things: the good is the most extensive of all, next comes the fine, and then the just. So if something is fine it is also good, but it is not the case that if something is good it is also fine. Observe how matter is good, because it adds something to generation and contributes [to it],<sup>289</sup> but is not fine and indeed is base. Hence, since the bad is the opposite of the good, and the fine [is the opposite] of the base, while the good is more extensive than the fine, it is clear that the bad that is opposite to the good, which is more extensive, will be less extensive, and the base will be more extensive. Hence, if something is bad it is always base, but it is not the case that if something is base it is always bad. Hence matter is base but it is not bad. Since Socrates knew this, that is the reason he said 'For I call the bad base'.

13.7. **'By Zeus Socrates'** (463d6): As a lover of learning Gorgias says 'I do not understand what you are saying Socrates. Please discuss it with me'.

13.8. **'Polus here will refute me'** (463e6-464a1): observe his modesty of character: how he wants Polus to refute him if he is speaking badly.

13.9. **'I can't off-hand find a single name'** (464b4-5): it has been said that there is no genus common to gymnastic and medicine.<sup>290</sup>

13.10. We left something out above,<sup>291</sup> so we must add the following here. Note that when we said that the flatterer has three

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<sup>289</sup> For the good in relation to the fine and the just, cf. 5.1, 10.1, and notes. For the Aristotelian terminology see *HA* 509a29, *GA* 715a12.

<sup>290</sup> See 13.2 above; Ol. assumes that the absence of a name reflects the metaphysical situation—where there is no name there is no genus to receive it.

<sup>291</sup> Ol. adds here to what was said at 13.1. For the rectification of an omission cf. 12.11.



elements: guesswork, shrewdness and courage—these are the elements of the flatterer, much as the statesman of philosophical character, as is said in the *Republic*, has rapidity of learning, good memory, and a focus on universals.<sup>292</sup> For it is these three that a man who philosophizes needs.

#### Lecture 14<sup>293</sup> (464c3-466a3)

14.1. ‘Here are four crafts’ (464c3): we have already discussed the definition of rhetoric and what impersonates what. So at this point [Socrates] proposes to discuss flattery, how it is divided into four and impersonates different things. For cookery impersonates medicine, and cosmetics impersonates gymnastics. For just as gymnastics fans our innate heat and makes good colour flower over the whole body, so too cosmetics aims to adorn the hair with an artificial elegance and colour.<sup>294</sup> Now these are the impostors with respect to the body. Those with respect to the soul are, as we have said, sophistry and rhetoric, sophistry impersonating the administration of law and rhetoric impersonating the administration of justice. So [Socrates] says that flattery makes observations and conjectures about the things the flattered person takes pleasure in, but does not come to know them. For it does not possess knowledge, if, that is, knowledge belongs to intellect. So it is not by knowing but by perceiving and conjecturing that [flattery] acts.

14.2. Note that a flatterer is as distant from a friend, as Aristotle says, as is the good from the pleasant.<sup>295</sup> For a friend even causes pain for the sake of the good, whereas a flatterer actually does harm for the sake of pleasure. And [Aristotle] states that there is a criterion for distinguishing a friend from a flatterer, for he says<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> W. refers to *Rep* 6, 486c1-d12. Ol. seems to be displaying a neoplatonic penchant for trilogies, perhaps condensing of the long list of requirements at 487a4-5, and adding the reference to ‘aiming at universals’ from *Rep*. 7.

<sup>293</sup> Lecture 14 is something of a mixture, perhaps a continuation of the previous *lexis* rather than an independent section. The fragmentary treatment is in danger of undermining some of Plato’s most scathing anti-rhetorical polemic—or perhaps this is what Ol. intends.

<sup>294</sup> Cosmetics is here treated by Ol. rather narrowly, as if equivalent to hairdressing and hair-dying. Thus it has two important differences from gymnastics, (1) the ‘bloom’ is artificial, and (2) it is confined to a limited area of the person. On Ol.’s text at 465b4 see on 14.8.

<sup>295</sup> Further use of Aristotle (*EN* 10.3, 1173b31-74a1) in support of *Grg.* on flattery, cf. 12.3.

<sup>296</sup> W. notes *nihil horum Aristot.* But this may come from a lost work.

'make two inconsistent proposals, and if he accepts one but not the other then he is a friend, but if he accepts both he is a flatterer'. This is what I mean: say 'I need to move to the suburbs', and see what he says. If he says 'Very well, for there one finds a fine supply of resources and a temperate climate', then say 'In fact I will not leave straightaway, for it is very hot there and we have no enjoyment of the resources'. If he opposes you with all his might and says 'You must move in any case', then he is a friend. If on the other hand he says 'Truly you are right, you must not move, for we are very busy' and suchlike, then recognize him as the flattering kind, who looks to what the one being flattered is saying.

14.3. **'So if a doctor and a cook had to compete among children'** (464d5): 'So', he says, 'if we muster an audience of unintelligent people, and judge a doctor and a cook before them, the doctor will be ostracized by the children—for children even shudder at the doctor as he often prescribes a fast too—but the cook will be loved as one who aims at their pleasure'. [Socrates] says 'Either before children or before men', since Aristotle too says that lack of intelligence is either through age, as in the case of children—for these are unintelligent as a result of their youth—or through reasoning-ability, as in the case of men who are mature but without education,<sup>297</sup> of whom it is possible to say that each must become a child a second time,<sup>298</sup> when they are worn down by their fears.<sup>299</sup>

14.4. **'And I say this sort of thing is shameful'** (464e2): It can be shown by means of a syllogism that the flatterer is base, in this way: 'The flatterer aims at the pleasant, someone who aims at the pleasant excites the passions, someone who excites the passions puts passion before himself, someone who puts passion before himself places passion in front of reasoning, someone who places passion in front of reasoning makes matter prior to form, someone who makes matter prior to form is base (for matter is base),

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<sup>297</sup> Not so much *EN* 1.3 (1095a2-13) as suggested by W., for this is not really suggestive of what we have in *OL*, comments centring on the passions rather than the lack of reasoning powers in the child-like; but rather *EE* 1.3 (1214b28-15a4) with the influence of *EE* 1.6.4-5.

<sup>298</sup> 'Old men are a child a second time' is proverbial, and occurs in Aristophanes *Clouds* 1417; also in the lost first version (scholion on *Axiochus* 367b), and elsewhere in comedy, as also in tragedy: see Dover (1968), 260.

<sup>299</sup> The 'fear' theme is perhaps connected with the fearful 'child within us' at *Phd.* 77d-e.

therefore the flatterer is base'. In order that no-one may say to us we got here unsyllogistically, because we arrived at what we were seeking through so many steps, we say that it is possible to cut down the number of premises by means of earlier syllogisms, and so to arrive at this conclusion in a way based on scientific method. Note that he directs this argument at Polus<sup>300</sup> and says 'I say it is base, Polus', since [Polus] [had twisted]<sup>301</sup> up and down [wishing] to learn what sort of a thing rhetoric is. Observe the philosophic character of Socrates: he converses instructively with a respectable person like Gorgias, but agonistically<sup>302</sup> with a headstrong fellow like Polus.

14.5. **'It is not a craft'** (465a2): see how he proclaims that this popular rhetoric is not a craft, since it does not contain knowledge of its subject-matter, nor does it supply a rational account. For anything that is non-rational is not a craft.

14.6. **'If you dispute any of this'** (465a6): since Socrates is expounding, he wants to show that he is expounding by means of demonstrations and [so] he says 'if I speak badly, I need to give an account'.<sup>303</sup>

14.7. **'Crooked'** (465b3): 'crooked' in the sense of evil-doing, 'deceptive' in the sense of aiming at the pleasant, 'mean' because soft and not stable, 'unfree' because slavish.

14.8. **'Shaping, colouring'** (465b4): for cosmetics encourages concern for shape and colouring, and a smooth face, and our very way of looking.<sup>304</sup> In [Demosthenes'] words 'with his shape, with his look, with his voice'.<sup>305</sup> These are the practices of cosmetics.

14.9. **'I want to tell you, as the geometricians would'** (465b7): geometrical analogy is 'As that is to that, so this is to this', that is,

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<sup>300</sup> Noting the address to Polus in particular at 465a1. It is a fact that Socrates is made to direct the argument pointedly at Polus during this exchange, cf. 463b7-c7, e2, e6, 465d4.

<sup>301</sup> Tentatively supplying these words to fill a lacuna. See W's apparatus.

<sup>302</sup> One of the types of Platonic discourse according to the 'character-classification' at D.L. 3.49; the term agonistic may be connected with *Tht.* 167e4.

<sup>303</sup> Ol. is again displaying his concern about procedure and the appropriate signs of procedure; however he does not take the opportunity to link this with the criticism of rhetoric, which is alleged to proceed without a *logos*.

<sup>304</sup> I.e. profile, complexion, lack of wrinkles, and eye make-up. Ol. says nothing about clothing, and probably reads αἰσθήσει with BTP rather than ἐσθῆτι or ἐσθῆσιν with Aristides and F here.

<sup>305</sup> Dem. 21.72 (*against Midias*).

'As 20 is to 10, so 4 is to 2'.<sup>306</sup> So he says 'I need to use geometrical analogy in this case for the sake of clarity'. Note then that either images are compared with images, or originals with originals, or originals with images. And either the images of the body are compared with the originals of the body itself or with the originals of the soul, or the images of the soul are compared with the originals of the soul itself or with the originals of the body. This is what I mean: the originals of the soul are the administration of law and the administration of justice, and of the body medicine and gymnastics. And the images of the soul are sophistry and rhetoric, and of the body cookery and cosmetics.

How then do we compare images with images? Suppose I say 'As cookery is to rhetoric, so cosmetics is to sophistry'. Observe that they are all images, some concerning the body and some concerning the soul. And [we compare] originals with originals: 'As gymnastic is to the administration of law, so medicine is to the administration of justice'. All of these are originals, some concerning the body and some concerning the soul. And [we compare] originals with images: 'As gymnastic is to cosmetics, so medicine is to cookery'. For gymnastic and medicine are originals, cookery and cosmetics are images, and concern the body. If I say 'As the administration of law is to sophistry, so justice is to rhetoric,' then in this case too I include both originals and images, but all concerning the soul'.

Since [Socrates] made his speech long through this [explanation], he defends himself and says 'Polus, since you did not understand what I said, I was compelled to draw out my speech, but if you had understood, I would not have spoken at length. So with you too: if I understand, do not speak at length, but if I am not able to follow you, draw out your speech'.

14.10. **'But since they are so close to each other'** (465c4): confusion occurs between sophistry and rhetoric. That's how Gorgias too, although a sophist, called himself a orator.<sup>307</sup> It is worth

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<sup>306</sup> W. compares anon. *Prol.* 27, which utilizes these analogies from *Grg.*, and specifies that they are 'geometrical', contrasting an 'arithmetical' example at *Phlb.* 66a.

<sup>307</sup> We should ask why Ol. sees Gorgias as a sophist. (i) The Platonic passage which does most to distinguish him from the sophists, *Meno* 95c, may have escaped him, as he seldom shows awareness of this dialogue, especially of its contribution to non-epistemological issues. (ii) Ol. may be anxious to be fair to Gorgias, and sophistic is actually better than rhetoric at 520b. (iii)

inquiring why sophistry and rhetoric are confused, when cosmetics and cookery are not. We say that cookery and cosmetics are pretences relating to the body. So if the body had distinguished them, there would have been confusion of them too. For how could the body, the part that is overcome by the passions arising from them, have been able to distinguish them? But as it is, since they are pretences concerning the body, and it is the soul that distinguishes them, for this reason, because the soul distinguishes them, they are not confused. But rhetoric and sophistry are pretences concerning the soul. So since it is the soul that is affected, how could it distinguish them when it is overcome and enslaved? This is the reason for their confusion.<sup>308</sup>

14.11. **'To justice'** (465c3): that is 'to the administration of justice'.

14.12. **'The Anaxagorean condition'** (465d3-4): Anaxagoras advocated homoiomerics.<sup>309</sup> Observing that all things come from all things, and being unable to resolve them by analysis he thought that all things were in all things and said 'All things were together'. So [Socrates] says 'If the body distinguished the things of the body, then all things would be in all things', that is 'There would have been confusion'. 'I say this to you, Polus, since you are familiar with the writings of Anaxagoras'. Note that Gorgias was a student of Empedocles, and Polus was attached to the doctrines of Anaxagoras.<sup>310</sup>

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Gorgias' work *On Not Being* is most easily understood as sophistry and was of interest to Neoplatonists because of its application of the Eleatic style of argument. (iv) Gorgias' own arena is that of the policy-making statesman (hence the law-giver) rather than the law-court, so that his activities (or those which he mimics, would be *prescriptive* rather than *corrective*. In this case he ought technically to conform with this section's view of a sophist rather than a rhetor.

<sup>308</sup> Ol.'s thinking is guided by, but goes well beyond, 465c7-d6, which concerns itself with the confusion of cookery and medicine, not cookery and cosmetics.

<sup>309</sup> A1DK. Though Ol. makes occasional reference to Presocratic philosophers, usually from Heraclitus on, his knowledge appears to have been highly derivative.

<sup>310</sup> On Gorgias and Empedocles cf. 0.9 above, D.L. 8.58-59. One scholion on 465d, apparently simplifying what Ol. tells us, emphasizes the alleged contrast between the respective presocratic backgrounds of Gorgias and Polus, but another more thoughtful one (p.58.16-20 Carbonara Naddei) suggests that Polus knew Anaxagoras because (i) he was Gorgias' pupil, and (ii) Gorgias was Empedocles' pupil, and (iii) Empedocles 'understood and taught the opinions of the philosophers.'

14.13. **'What I say rhetoric is'** (465d7): now [Socrates] introduces another definition based on the images [of the crafts], saying 'Rhetoric is what corresponds to cookery with respect to the soul. For what cookery is with respect to the body, so rhetoric is with respect to the soul. Note that he is speaking about popular rhetoric, since in the *Phaedrus* he says that true rhetoric corresponds to medicine.<sup>311</sup>

14.14. **'Now perhaps I've done something absurd'** (465e1): observe his explanation of why he employed a long speech when he has declared his preference for short speaking.

14.15. **'And now if you can do anything with this answer'** (466a2): [Socrates] says 'if you can do something with this answer and can oppose it, then go ahead and try to argue against it'.

14.16. **'What I say rhetoric is'** (465d7): Plato here makes copious use of the Attic device called 'non-division'. It is 'non-division' when a number of '*men*' connectives are used, but no '*de*'. 'What (*men oun*) I say it is': note one '*men*' connective. 'Perhaps (*men oun*) absurd': note another '*men*' and no '*de*'. 'It is worthy (*men oun*) of pardon': note another '*men*'. Some write 'it is worthy indeed (*mentoi*)',<sup>312</sup> but wrongly, for one should write 'worthy (*men oun*)'. 'And if I (*men oun*) with you': note another '*men*' connective.

### Lecture 15<sup>313</sup> (466a4-467c4)

15.1. **'All right then, what are you saying? You think rhetoric is flattery?'** (466a4): as I have already said, the aim of the dialogue is to investigate the ethical principles of constitutional well-being. It has already been said that it is not rhetoric but constitutional science. Note that in what has preceded [Socrates] has supplied the creative cause, whereas here we are seeking the *formal cause*. For although it has been stated what rhetoric is not, we need also to say what it is.

When Socrates said that it was flattery, Polus objects. But we must understand that objection to syllogisms is of three kinds: for

<sup>311</sup> Again insistence, in the light of *Phdr.* 270b, that Socrates in *Grg.* is opposed only to 'democratic' or 'unscientific' rhetoric, cf. 9.4

<sup>312</sup> 465e3. No ancient variant is known here from other sources.

<sup>313</sup> In lecture 15 Ol. begins with an analysis of some of Polus' arguments in syllogistic form, together with Socrates' objections. This is followed by explanation of some of the seemingly paradoxical tenets which Socrates espouses.

we object to the premises, or we object to the syllogistic figure, or, if we can object to neither premises nor figure, we seek another means of overturning the argument. For instance, if somebody said man is a stone, a stone is a horse, therefore man is a horse, we resist the premises as being false. But if somebody said man is an animal, horse is an animal, hence man is a horse—in that case the premises are valid (for they are true, both the one that claims horse is an animal, and the one that says man is an animal), but the figure is fallacious. For both premises in a second figure syllogism are affirmative.<sup>314</sup> But if the figure is also valid and the premises are not false, then you need to overturn it by other means, as Aristotle too does in the *Physics* (A2-3), dispelling and exposing their sophisms through the same means as they had employed to create the difficulty.

15.2. So here too Polus, unable to lay hold of either premises or figure, tries to overturn it by other means. Polus' syllogisms proceed as follows: 'If the flatterer is thought to be worthless in a city, and the orator is not thought to be worthless in a city, it follows that the orator is not a flatterer'. Here Socrates seizes on the second premise, the negative one, and says 'I do not merely show that orators are thought to be worthless in the city, but that they do not even receive recognition for this—i.e. as orators—in the city'.<sup>315</sup>

Then Polus argues this through other premises as follows: 'The orator has great power, someone who has great power is not thought worthless, therefore the orator is not thought worthless'. But in this case too [Socrates] seizes on the minor premise, as we shall show, and says that orators do not have great power. But Polus constructs an argument through other premises like this: 'Orators do what they want, those who do what they want have great power, therefore orators have great power'. Again [Socrates] seizes upon the minor premise, saying [orators] do not do what they want. But then Polus constructs an argument as follows: 'Orators do what seems good to them, those who do what seems good to them do what they want, so orators do what they want'. In this case [Socrates] seizes on the major premise, saying that what seems good to them is not also what they want. To this Polus no longer says anything.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Compare 12.4.

<sup>315</sup> As 15.3 below indicates, Ol. means in the ideal city.

<sup>316</sup> These last paragraphs show how dedicated Ol. is to casting arguments

15.3. It is worth inquiring how it is that in cities orators do not enjoy well-being. For we see that they are not in a worthless<sup>317</sup> position, for they have power over laws, magistracies, everything. We reply 'Pay attention to what Socrates is saying, that they are worthless in *true* cities, not in those governed by the mob or by factionalism, but in well-organized ones'. That is surely why [Plato] himself said 'This is not a single city, it is [a number of] cities',<sup>318</sup> implying that a disorganized multitude is not a unity but a discord. And so in the true city orators are not recognized, seeing that even in disorderly [cities] the more exacting place of audience, the Areopagus, was free of such rhetoric.<sup>319</sup> For no [rhetorical] prologues were delivered there, nor was there any other clever stuff. So it was a good point that [orators] *are* considered worthless.

But how is it that [orators] do not possess great power? We must take this as agreed, that power is on the side of good, as indeed Polus himself thinks, whereas lack of power is on the side of evil. Certainly we should not say that God lacked the power to do evil, but did not want to.<sup>320</sup> For he is altogether powerless even to have this power to do evil—or rather this lack of power. For his essence consists in his goodness. Hence we too have power insofar as we participate in the good in whatever way. So someone who is doing some evil is not said to have power. If he were some tyrant who was sick and did not want the doctor to touch him, but killed him instead, this would be a case of lack of power rather than power. In the same way too if you give a bloodletting knife to someone without medical training, or a golden lyre to someone who is not musical, or a sharp sword to an ill tempered fellow, these people are not said to have power, but lack of power, since they do nothing of any value [with them]. In the same way too those who are orators and use its power for evil ends are not said to have power, but rather to practise impotence.

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in syllogistic form, even though aspects of his reconstruction will sound dubious to modern readers; up to this point we have seen less persistent use of syllogistic at 4.12, 6.1, 6.2, 11.1, 12.4, and 14.4.

<sup>317</sup> We have retained Irwin's 'worthless', though 'insignificant' might more accurately translate Ol.'s understanding of the term. There is no use for the orator in the true city because it is unified, and there is no rift between those needing to persuade and those needing to be persuaded.

<sup>318</sup> *Rep.* 422e8.

<sup>319</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 1.1, 1354a21-24.

<sup>320</sup> Again god's lack of power to do bad; cf. 11.2.



15.4. But how then do they not want what they think best? We must understand that all men by their very nature desire the good, indeed that even inanimate things do. That's how a clod of earth hurtles down from its position on account of its own proper good, while a spark flies up.<sup>321</sup> So the tyrant or thief or some other person employs evil as if it were good, and he thinks that what he is doing is good, but he does not want this, for it is what seems best that he pursues. Indeed he is so far from wanting this, that if he is given careful guidance, he reverts to what is really good. So they do not actually want what they think. Orators too set their hands to evil, and do not actually want the things they think best. Having nothing to say against this, Polus first of all complains of obstruction, and says 'Yes, have you the nerve to say this? What? Doesn't a man actually want what seems best?'<sup>322</sup> Next he demands that Socrates give a demonstration, and the one who had long thought it beneath him to be asked questions now has questions asked of him by Socrates and gives answers.

15.5. **'All right then, what are you saying? You think rhetoric is flattery?'** (466a4): what has been considered so far means also that luxury, wealth and such things are not the formal cause of constitutional well-being, but that the virtues are, and that it is not the case that each man wants what he thinks. For just as Ajax wanted to kill Agamemnon and Odysseus, and thought it was them he was slaying when coming down upon the flocks in his madness,<sup>323</sup> but in reality was not doing what he wanted; and just as a man who wants to be healed, who does not have the mind of a doctor and takes water at the inappropriate time, does what seems good to him but not what he wants—for he wants health, yet health does not come to him but his fever actually intensifies—so too the orator does what seems good to him, not what he thinks best. For his thinking it best is a mark of his lack of power. So it has been shown generally how one who does what he thinks best does not necessarily do what he wants.

Note this too, that tyranny is also called mob-rule and is not a genuine 'constitution', since the tyrant also has a host of irrational

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<sup>321</sup> Ol. draws on selected Aristotelian views from *EN* 1.1, *De Caelo* 1.7 etc., *Met.* 12.7.

<sup>322</sup> Referring to 467b11.

<sup>323</sup> This is the situation with which Sophocles' play *Ajax* commences.

passions that trouble him,<sup>324</sup> and someone with a host of irrational passions is in a worse position than a multitude of worthless men. For what is more awful than irrational passions troubling our soul?

Note then that Polus lays hold of the premises of the syllogisms. Sometimes he lays hold of two simultaneously, and Socrates criticizes him.<sup>325</sup> For they should each be taken one at a time, so that the interlocutor too knows which he should address his argument to.

15.6. **'No. I said it's a part of flattery'** (466a6): so he says it is a part of flattery. For it is not simply identical with flattery, since there are many flatteries, as we've shown.

15.7. **'Then (do)<sup>326</sup> you think that'** (466a9): observe what a confused question Polus asks. Socrates realizes that *'ara'* is either inferential or interrogative,<sup>327</sup> and is in two minds, and says 'Are you asking a question, or stating the first premise of an argument?'

15.8. **'Then I think the orators have the least power'** (466b9): 'Least' puts it nicely, since however the fall of the soul occurs, it cannot fail to preserve some concept or imprint of the good.<sup>328</sup>

15.9. **'No, by the.... Indeed you don't'** (466e6): Though he'd intended to swear, he did not complete the oath, but cut it short, teaching us that we should accustom ourselves to control oaths.<sup>329</sup>

15.10. **'Then how are the orators'** (467a8): It is possible to compose a syllogism as follows, demonstrating that the orators do not do what they want:

<sup>324</sup> The multitude of desires associated with the tyrant is clear from *Rep.* 9 572d-573b, though Ol. does not mention the extent to which the tyrant there comes to be dominated by a single overriding desire.

<sup>325</sup> Polus at 466b11-c2, and Socrates d5-6.

<sup>326</sup> Bracketed to render ambiguity.

<sup>327</sup> Ol. fails to realize that the inferential *ἄρα* and interrogative *ἤρα* would have sounded very different to an Attic speaker.

<sup>328</sup> I.e. 'least' is more accurate than 'no power'. The fall of the soul to this corporeal world from a higher existence is part of the standard belief-system of the Neoplatonists, as well as rival religious systems such as Gnosticism. Such views are detectable also in Plato, but belong usually to the religious (Orphic ?) background of the idea of transmigration (e.g. *Grg.* 493a). Plato stresses the affect of this-worldly failures on our subsequent existence(s), and the only events in our non-bodily state adversely affecting a this-worldly life are (i) the actual choice of lives in the Myth of Er (*Rep.* 10.619b ff.), and (ii) the failure of the soul to fly high enough in *Phdr.*, 248a-d. The latter passage is influential here.

<sup>329</sup> Another moral lesson, and one here which Christians would not have found it hard to agree with.

Orators are flatterers

Flatterers aim at the pleasant

Those who aim at the pleasant do not aim at the good

Those who do not aim at the good do not have craft or knowledge

Those who do not have craft or knowledge do not have intelligence

Those who do not have intelligence do what they think best, not what they want

Hence orators do what they think best, not what they want.

15.11. **'This is shocking and monstrous stuff you're saying'** (467b10): observe how he protests and shouts Socrates down.

15.12. **'Don't abuse me'** (467b11): it is because [Polus] likes words of rhyming terminations that Socrates says to him 'best Polus'.<sup>330</sup> Then, from his very wish to criticize him and to say 'You like these rhyming terminations', he again uses the same figure, saying 'So as to address you in your own style'.

15.13. **'All right, I'm ready to answer'** (467c3): observe how the man who long ago thought himself above answering now takes it upon himself to answer, wanting to learn what Socrates is saying.

### Lecture 16<sup>331</sup> (467c5-468e5)

16.1. **'Then do you think people'** (467c5): the task that lies before [Socrates] is to show that what one wants to do are good things. To show this he employs the following syllogism: 'Someone who brings about what he wants brings about 'that for the sake of which' [one acts], 'that for the sake of which' is good, therefore someone who brings about what he wants brings about what is good'. Again,

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<sup>330</sup> ὃ λῶστε Πῶλε certainly repeats omegas and lambdas to create a rich mocking tone, but this is scarcely a case of rhyming terminations (ὁμοιοκατάληκτα). The term is used loosely here as at 3.2 above (cf. 3.4). Hence in the next observation Ol. is drawing attention to the words προσείπω σε κατὰ σέ, where the initial sound *prosiþose* involved a jingle to the ears of those who had (as repeated textual errors confirm) ceased to distinguish adequately between long and short 'o'.

<sup>331</sup> In lecture 16 Ol. discusses Socrates' tactics against Polus. He distinguishes between means, ends, and things that serve as means and end alike: what one really wants is to attain the end, not the means to it. Ol.'s explanation of things good, bad, and neither is somewhat different from anything we could expect to find in Plato, and reflects Neoplatonic views about the nature of evil. The lecture ends with lessons in syllogistic form, which draw on the material so far discussed.

in order to show how someone who brings about what he wants brings about 'that for the sake of which', he constructs a division and says that of all things some are solely 'that for the sake of which' [one acts], and others are solely for the sake of something else, and others function in both ways, being both ends and means. Now the first cause is solely an end, for it is on its account, i.e. on account of the final good, that all our labours are performed, and it is never a means.<sup>332</sup> For if what is adopted for some end is inferior to that for the sake of which it is adopted, then [the first cause] will be inferior to something, which is contrary to divine law. Furthermore, if it is both a means and an end there will be a pair there, where no duality can be contemplated. And if they are brought into a unity, then once again there will be something superior to unite it, which is absurd. Hence [the first cause] is solely an end.

Matter, on the other hand, is solely a means, for it is for the sake of the forms that matter is adopted. So it is not an end, for if the end is superior to the means, and matter is the least good, how could it be an end? Everything in between [these two] functions in both ways. Hence bodies are both ends and means, compared with matter they are ends, while compared with the soul they are means.

And these three are observed in the sphere of action too:<sup>333</sup> for well-being is solely an end, blood-letting and drugs are solely means, whereas health is both. For with regard to blood-letting and drugs [health] is an end, while with respect to well-being it is a means. Hence, we must understand that the end is that for the sake of which, that the end is good, and that it is this that we want to bring about. Therefore someone who brings about what he wants brings about the end. And if someone says 'What? Do not we also want evil?', reply 'No, not properly speaking; but, because the good is either the apparent or the true good, it sometimes happens that we desire the apparent [good] though we believe we are pursuing

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<sup>332</sup> A striking affirmation of standard neoplatonist doctrine (W. aptly cites *Proc. Theol.* 2.9.58.5-8SW, *In Prm.* 1116.5-7, *Dam. Philb.* 217) in Aristotelian terms, cf. *Rep.* 357b-d and *EN* 1.1-2, 6 etc., *Met.* 12.7. In this discussion 'end' has been used as an alternative to 'that for the sake of which' and 'means' rather than 'that for the sake of something else' reducing the clumsiness in translation.

<sup>333</sup> I.e. in various states which one may experience, one's activities, and in individual acts, as opposed to the sphere of entities which may exist for their own sake or that of another. The distinction is analogous to that between nouns and verbs.

the true good. Hence the end is properly the good.' And that the first cause is said to be solely an end is clear from the hymn, which says

'From you all things come, while you alone arise from no cause'.<sup>334</sup>

Hence it is shown that someone who brings about what he wants brings about the end.

16.2. In order to show again that the end is good, he says 'The end is aimed at, what is aimed at is good, therefore the end is good'. That what is aimed at is good is evident from [the fact that] we naturally aim at the good, whence Aristotle (*EN* 1.1) praises those who say that good is what everything aims at. Hence it is clear that the end is aimed at and good.

[Socrates] again employs division, along the following lines: some things are good, such as well-being (and wealth too, as Polus believes),<sup>335</sup> others are bad, such as piracy and such like, and others besides are intermediates. And the intermediates are either sometimes fine and sometimes bad—for it is possible for someone to sail for a good purpose, such as for prayer or for some other holy purpose, but it is possible also for a bad one, for piracy or fraud—or [they are] neither bad nor good, such as wood and stone and such<sup>336</sup>—for these are neither good nor bad in themselves, but depend on the user. Note, then, that evil is observed in deeds, for something that does not involve deeds would be called neither good nor bad.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Also quoted at 0.8. Other verses from the *Hymn* are quoted at 4.3 and 47.2.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. 16.6: Ol. notes the strong *ad hominem* character of the argument with Polus; see above on 14.4.

<sup>336</sup> Ol. is analysing 467e6-468a4, and coming to the conclusion that, of Plato's two groups of things which are neither good nor bad in themselves, sitting, walking, running, and sailing are examples of things sometimes partaking of good, sometimes of bad, while stone, wood, etc. are examples of things which partake of neither. The scholiast also separates out the two groups in this fashion.

<sup>337</sup> One might deduce that Ol. would regard poverty, ignorance, and ill-health as involving deeds (πράξεις) if this is to agree with 467e; however, he is aware of Socrates choosing his examples to suit Polus' beliefs. One might also suspect a clash with Ol.'s optimistic doctrine that the Good is spread over all, 0.3 and 10.1, extending even to matter, 5.1, 13.6, because it contributes to generation. But the present passage is commonsense comment, not distinctive Neoplatonic doctrine; accordingly Ol. does not deny that anything is good (in theory), only that it is *called* good (in practice).

We must understand that the good is an end, for it is with [the good] in view that we read and learn and travel and do whatever else we do, whereas evil is neither an end nor a means. That it is not an end is clear from the fact that only the good is such. That it is not a means either may be inferred from this: a means is embraced for the sake of something else, whereas evil not only does not lead to the good, but sets one at a distance from it. Hence evil is neither.<sup>338</sup> On the other hand, things that are intermediate, e.g. sailing and suchlike, can be both. So the end is good. And if this is so, and we want all things that are ends, then someone who brings about what he wants is good.

16.3. From what has been said, we must draw the conclusion that orators do not have great power.<sup>339</sup> The first syllogism is this: 'Orators kill, expropriate property, or practise mud-slinging; those who act thus undertake something which is both good and bad by nature;<sup>340</sup> those who undertake what is both good and bad lack understanding and intelligence';<sup>341</sup> <therefore orators lack understanding and intelligence>.<sup>342</sup> The second syllogism is hypothetical: 'If orators fail to achieve, they are are not using understanding and intelligence, but [orators] do not use understanding and intelligence, therefore orators fail to achieve'.<sup>343</sup> The third syllogism is

<sup>338</sup> If the manuscript reading is to be kept, then it means 'evil does not even exist', and Ol. must be assuming that anything in existence must either be an end or a means, so that evil, being neither, *does not exist*. It is Proclus' theory that *absolute* evil does not exist as *evil must partake of good in order to have any existence* (*In Prm.* 835.14-19), and Ol. tries to convince us that it is only our own inadequate knowledge which leads us to assume that there is injustice in the world (17.2, 19.3); but an unequivocal denial of the reality of evil is still unexpected. It is therefore preferable to read ὥστε οὐδέ<τερόν> ἐστὶ τὸ κακόν.

<sup>339</sup> The paragraph is perhaps designed to show that Plato can use all three figures of the syllogism, and the hypothetical syllogism as well, within a connected chain of argument. On the details see Tarrant, 1997c.

<sup>340</sup> It is interesting that piracy had been viewed as unequivocally bad in 16.2, but Ol. is now simply following the argument at 468bc. Note that while 'undertake' is used in this premise simply as 'do', it is more easily interpreted as 'aim at' in the next.

<sup>341</sup> Lack of intelligence seems to have been suggested by 466e10, 467a5. The terminology 'understanding and intelligence' is less typical of *Grg.* than of the *Meno*, where the politician acts on right opinion, lacking understanding (99b8, 11) and intelligence (c8, e6). Ol. notices this work only for its contribution to epistemology, see 9.1, 10.2, where 97e-8a is relevant.

<sup>342</sup> Supplied to give the argument a conclusion, though with no confidence that it was present in the original text. This conclusion will then supply one premise for the corrupt second argument.

<sup>343</sup> The sentence has two problems. The first is the invalid inference, but

in the second figure: 'Orators act badly, those who do what they want do not act badly, therefore orators do not do what they want'.<sup>344</sup> The fourth syllogism is in the third figure: 'Orators do what they think best, orators do not do what they want, therefore some who do what they think best do not do what they want'.<sup>345</sup> The fifth syllogism is this: 'orators do not do what they want, those who do not do what they want do not have great power,<sup>346</sup> <therefore, orators do not have great power>'.<sup>347</sup> These are the messages he wants to convey in this section.

16.4. **'For they sail for the sake of wealth'** (467d5): [he says] this because of Polus, who thinks that [wealth] is a good in itself, with the result that it is an end for the sake of which they sail; but sailing does happen to be a means.

16.5. **'Now, is there any of the things that are'** (467e1-2): here begins the second section, the one that concerns the good.

16.6. **For we want good things, you say'** (468c5-6): [Socrates] said 'you say', not because he does not accept that we want what is good, but because Polus himself had agreed to it. That is why [he says] 'as you say', meaning 'as you too agree'.

16.7. **'Why don't you answer?'** (468c7-8): Polus sees that the conclusion is coming and speaks more hesitantly as he is about to meet defeat. That is why [Socrates] says to him '<Why><sup>348</sup> don't you reply?'.

16.8. **'Then since we agree on this'** (468d1): this is the conclusion, from which it is about to be shown that those who do not do what they want do not possess great power.

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this may not have struck Ol. as illegitimate, since he has reasonable grounds for excluding a similar invalid inference elsewhere (*In Phd.*, 2.4), and, in effect, is happy to permit such figures where 'if' = 'if and only if'. The second problem must be solved by emendation, for 'fail to achieve' is in both cases simply 'commit injustice' in the MS. But we do not need to demonstrate that orators commit injustice, but rather to demonstrate that lack of understanding leads to acting badly. The hypothetical syllogism is presumably detected by Ol. at 468d1-4. The problems are discussed by Tarrant, 1997c, and we here read ἀτυχοῦσιν for ἀδικοῦσιν, a word which would have sounded similar to the recorder.

<sup>344</sup> This argument is detected at 468d5-7.

<sup>345</sup> The conclusion is an edited version of 468e3-5, the premises are from d3-d6.

<sup>346</sup> The premises are detected at 468d6-e3.

<sup>347</sup> Conclusion supplied by W., as required by the first sentence of 16.3.

<sup>348</sup> Beutler, 1938a, restores this from both lemma and Platonic text.

**Lecture 17<sup>349</sup> (468e6-470a12)**

17.1. 'Ha! I suppose you wouldn't choose to have the liberty' (468e6): it is especially characteristic of men brought in the gutter,<sup>350</sup> when they have nothing to reply to what is said, to home in on [an opponent's] life-style and say 'Well, are you the sort of person that you bid [others to be]?'<sup>351</sup> Now we must understand that even if Socrates were base and wicked, we should attend to his words, to see if they contain demonstrations. For we must always aim at the universal and spurn particulars. Of course Epictetus too bids us when we meet people not to discuss many things but a few necessary ones, and not to mention food and drink, nor to praise or revile anyone.<sup>352</sup> For he knew that all these led to spurning the universal and concern for particulars. So Polus too is to be blamed when he says to Socrates 'Don't you think it a fine thing to kill and expropriate?' So Socrates says 'By killing, do you mean justly or unjustly?' To this Polus replies 'Whether justly or unjustly, the killer is enviable', to which Socrates says 'Hush, Polus'.

17.2. Note that there are these four: *killing justly, killing unjustly, being killed justly, being killed unjustly*.

Now first and most wretched is *killing unjustly*. Why? Because [the killer] commits injustice both on himself and on the one he kills, and primarily he commits injustice on himself. For note that there are these three: *soul, body, possessions*. Now we must not pay any regard to possessions, and hence the poor man or one who loses his possessions is not wretched. For we are not born with them nor do we depart [this life] with them. We should pay more attention to our body than to possessions. But since the body is an instrument of the soul, we should pay much more attention to the soul. So someone who commits injustice subjects his rational faculty to the passions and disturbs his soul, and a man who suffers

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<sup>349</sup> In lecture 17 Ol. discusses the degree of misfortune to be attributed to the agents and victims of just and unjust killings, and goes beyond the theoretical basis of Socrates' stance. Of special interest is Ol.'s reconciliation of the notion of unjust killing with his picture of a universe in which nobody is actually treated unjustly. The lecture features frequent use of the Stoic moralist Epictetus, and is also indebted to Plato's *Laws*.

<sup>350</sup> Literally 'at the crossroads'.

<sup>351</sup> Deleting λέγειν as suggested by W. in his apparatus.

<sup>352</sup> *Man.* 33.1-2, cf. 17.4 below.



this commits injustice on himself. Since this is a very great suffering, he is for this reason the most wretched.<sup>353</sup>

Next [most] wretched is the man who *is killed justly*. He is in the second place because the first went so far as actually to commit injustice,<sup>354</sup> and by enjoying unnatural behaviour continues to travel the path from health to sickness. But someone who is killed justly, although he deserved it, is at least healed and returns to the natural state. Third [most] wretched is one who is *killed unjustly*. For note that there is no disorder in the universe, but providence observes all, so that even if one appears to be killed unjustly, the creator knows the *point* of it.<sup>355</sup> The man had offended in a former life, and he is put to death for this reason. So his killer committed injustice in killing him unjustly, but he himself was properly put to death. He is in third place because he *appears* to be killed unjustly.

For instance, the story is told that someone said to Socrates 'I do not grieve because you are being put to death, but because you are being put to death unjustly', and Socrates replied to him 'would you prefer that it were justly?' Just as some country-dweller who goes into court, and sees some people receiving benefits and others punishments, will condemn [the process] in ignorance of the reason why a thing occurred, but when he learns the way each has behaved will accept it; so too, as we do not know why [Socrates] deserved to die, we find fault. However if we knew that each of us gets the treatment he deserves, then we would never utter the tragic lines that say 'I dare to state that gods do not exist, for I am stunned by evil men's good luck.'<sup>356</sup> Hence Epictetus says (*Man.*

<sup>353</sup> Much of the material in this paragraph is closely related to 477a-e.

<sup>354</sup> A Premise seems to be missing here: injustice is a state of degeneration (πονηρία, *Grg.* 477ab), i.e. something contrary to nature.

<sup>355</sup> The notion of Providence here probably owes much to Plato's *Laws*, particularly 10.899d-907b, particularly harsh is the notion that those who suffer wrong have erred in a previous life, and here there is the suggestion of a Platonic precedent at *Laws* 9 872e-873a given in the form of an ancient 'myth or logos' by which murderers are destined to experience the same fate as their victim in a future life. If this had merely been called a myth, then perhaps Ol. would have been obliged to afford it an allegorical interpretation. As things are the doctrine of original sin seems to accord poorly with Plato's regular views, according to which sins of a previous life are atoned for in the underworld, and no re-incarnation takes place for those who have not been, or cannot be, cured. See also note on 15.8 on the fall of the soul.

<sup>356</sup> This verse of unknown tragic origin (adesp. 465N, 465K) is found also at *Simpl. In Epict.* 95.41-43. While the first line could be more simply explained otherwise, Ol. clearly interprets it in this fashion.

17) 'Just as one who is going to act in a drama must play the role well to win acclaim, so too we must manage well with the body that has been entrusted to us.' For while the body has been granted us in accordance with our deserts,<sup>357</sup> as internally motivated creatures it is up to us to adopt a policy which is for the best, even though we are thought deserving of punishment and we undergo a loss for it, taking earthly things in place of heavenly things, much like Homer's Glaucón (*Iliad* 6.236), 'taking bronze for gold'.

In the fourth place comes someone who *kills justly*, who is also unenviable. Now why is he unenviable? An unenviable person is one whom we ought not to envy. So we ought not to envy someone who kills justly nor one who kills unjustly.<sup>358</sup> But [note that] someone who is most wretched of all is so because he is enslaved to incurable passions, and someone who kills justly is unenviable simply because he comes to this. Indeed he prays that he will not come to this, as the doctor also prays that he will never encounter a woman in terrible suffering, but when she is taken in the suffering of childbirth he cuts out the foetus.<sup>359</sup> This is unenviable, to the extent that he was himself anxious not to come to this.

17.3. Note that there are these two: *state* and *activity*.<sup>360</sup> Furthermore, a state is either comfortable and choiceworthy, or uncomfortable and to be avoided. So too with activity. Either both one's state and one's activity are choiceworthy, or both are to be avoided, or the state is choiceworthy but the activity is to be avoided, or the activity is choiceworthy but the state is to be avoided. If both are choiceworthy, then that produces the statesman, who desires that the city should have good laws and that all should share harmony so that no-one kills [anyone], and this is the enviable [person]. If

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<sup>357</sup> One should note here Plato's connexion between former lives and the kind of physical body a soul is to adopt in its next life, *Tim.* 90e-92c.

<sup>358</sup> Following W.'s suggested emendation. The worst case is unjustly killing; the second worst, being killed justly; the third worst, being killed unjustly (as it seems); the fourth, killing justly. Presumably in this last case one must be conscious that one's act is an act of justice.

<sup>359</sup> This practice is the last resort of ancient obstetricians (after the ancient equivalent of the forceps delivery) when the mother, though capable of surviving childbirth, is in grave danger owing to the impossibility of natural birth. The principle to be followed is explained by Soranus *Gynaecology* 4.9.1.5-6: 'Even if the offspring is destroyed, one must look after the woman in labour'. See also Aetius, *Iatricorum* book 16, Paulus *Epitomae medicae libri* 6.74. The abortion-debate certainly had its equivalent in ancient ethical theory as Ol. shows.

<sup>360</sup> The terms translate ἔξις and ἐνέργεια.

both are to be avoided, that produces the most wretched [person], someone who kills unjustly.

If the state is to be avoided but the activity is choiceworthy, then what results is vanity. For here the state is not choiceworthy, since it did not come into being for the good but for good repute among men, but the activity is fine, just because it is going on. So we should shun vanity, as Epictetus also says: ‘Master [embracing] statues and when thirsty drink and spit it out so that you get the better of the effects of thirst, but don’t tell anyone’, since this aims at good repute.<sup>361</sup> So we should not say ‘I fast, I am sober’. If the state is choiceworthy but the activity is to be avoided, then what results is killing justly. For the the state is choiceworthy, since [the agent] did not wish to come to this [situation], but the activity was to be avoided—for what could he do? It is like a doctor who cuts out the foetus. So it is not this man one should envy, but the statesman; and one should pity the one who is miserable.

17.4. That is what is going on here. Let us now proceed to the next passage and remark that Polus is to be blamed for thinking that demonstrations are not true if [the speaker’s way of] life is unworthy. For we should not descend to particulars, but spurn them, and instead fasten upon universals, as Plato himself bids us and also Epictetus,<sup>362</sup> who says ‘Do not speak continuously when you meet people, but speak about necessary things, and not about food or drink, e.g. “today I ate this or drank that”, and “do not find fault or praise anyone continuously”. For all these are particulars and hold you back from the ascent to universals.’

17.5. **‘Then whoever kills anyone he thinks fit’** (469a9): note how he asks his question in a confused manner. For Socrates spoke about those who kill unjustly, but he takes it in a generic sense and asks him ‘What! is a man who kills justly wretched?’ and Socrates responds ‘Of course not’.

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<sup>361</sup> *Man.* 47, Epictetus is advising the pupil *not* to make an open display of his hardness by embracing snow-covered statues as Diogenes of Sinope is said to have done (D.L. 6.23), but to toughen himself up away from the public eye. Hence our text at the beginning of this sentence is in doubt, since it is by no means obvious that κρατήσας τοὺς ἀνδριάντας could mean ‘Controlling the impulse to embrace statues’. Perhaps one should read ἀσκήσας <μὴ περιλάμβανε> τοὺς ἀνδριάντας, which would relate closely to the text of Epictetus.

<sup>362</sup> *Man.* 33.1-2, cf. 17.1 above. But Epictetus does not share the Platonist’s concern about universals and particulars.

17.6. **'Well, I suppose the man who is killed'** (469b3): Socrates says that a man who is killed [unjustly] is less wretched than a man who kills unjustly, whereas Polus says the opposite, namely that a man who is killed unjustly is more wretched than a man who kills [unjustly]. From this appears the lesson that bids [us] to suffer injustice rather than to commit injustice. For a man who commits injustice on another primarily commits injustice on himself, since as we said his soul is disturbed and he subjects himself to the passions. But someone who suffers injustice and bears it nobly, without disturbance but with contempt, is not even said to suffer injustice, provided that he is not disturbed and has not committed injustice on anyone.

17.7. **'If you say being a tyrant is what I say it is'** (469c4): the remark 'If you say being a tyrant is what I say it is' shows that tyranny is a good thing. So we say that just as monarchy is an ambiguous thing, so too is tyranny. For just as kingship consists in either establishing excellent laws, kingship in the true sense of the word, or in establishing wicked laws, hence too a tyranny overturns the laws, but one form of tyranny overturns laws that were badly established and is a good tyranny, concerning which [Plato] says in his [treatment of the] Constitution that there is a need for a well-bred tyrant, one who is quick to learn and of good memory and young,<sup>363</sup> whereas the other form of tyranny, which overturns well established laws, is most evil.

17.8. **'My splendid man'** (469c8): Socrates says 'Grasp my meaning from this: suppose I have a dagger under my arm and a torch, and I say to you "I have a wonderful tyrannical power. For I have the power to kill everyone while the market-place is crowded, and also to set fire to the dockyards and the triremes and the boats, and in general I have the power to slash clothes and to cut off men's heads." If you do not believe me I would show you the dagger and the torch, and you would say, "This is not great power; for

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<sup>363</sup> There is a question of whether the reference ἐν τῇ πολιτείᾳ is actually to *Rep.* as W. assumes (since Ol. normally referred to this work as πολιτεῖαι), or to the Platonic ideal state, in whatever work. Though Ol. may be thinking of *Rep.* 6 (487a, 490c, 494b), these qualities are not there associated with the tyrant; hence W. refers rather to *Laws* 4.709e, and he might have included the whole passage to 712a, which explicitly commends the right sort of tyranny as a starting-point for a new constitution. Either Ol. (or the recorder) is making a mistake, or there is no reference to *Rep.* A similar case occurs at 37.2, and here there is no question of acquitting him.

everyone could easily kill and set things on fire like that.” And if I said “Why would I not have great power?”, you would say “Because someone who acts like that harms himself and is put to death by sentence of a court.” So why, if that is the case, do you think it a fine thing to kill?’

17.9. **‘Because someone who acts that way is bound to be punished’** (470a5): and punished not with a fine but with destruction. Now if this punishment is severe, so much more is that of the soul. For it is possible to calm the anger of the ruler by bribery. For if you stole a large amount, and used a little for a bribe, you undergo nothing. But no-one will agree to the punishment of his soul. I do not mean that we should be concerned about the places of punishment which will be found beneath the earth, but rather that even now the greatest misfortune consists in a soul that is disturbed.<sup>364</sup> Hence we should not commit injustice but possess a temperate soul. For it is not money that delights an upright constitution—so even a poor man is able to lead an excellent life—nor is it beauty of body, for even men who are maimed and of ugly appearance lead an excellent life if they possess beauty of soul.

17.10. **‘But otherwise it is an evil, and is having little power’** (470a12): ‘if nothing beneficial follows, then it is not great and good, but petty and evil’.<sup>365</sup>

### Lecture 18<sup>366</sup> (470b1-471d2)

18.1. **‘And let’s consider’** (470b1): we must clarify what has already been demonstrated and what remains to be demonstrated. So note that it has been said that we should investigate the form of constitutional well-being. We have shown that it is not rhetoric. Then Polus said everyone who brings about what he thinks best also brings about what he wants. Socrates refuted this, and showed that someone who brings about what he thinks best does not have great power. And when Polus said ‘What? Is it simply that

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<sup>364</sup> An important allegorical position on the location of the punishment of wrongdoing.

<sup>365</sup> It is possible that Ol. did not read the final δύνασθαι in his text of 470a10. Thompson wished to exclude it.

<sup>366</sup> In lecture 18 Ol. reviews the argument so far, and foreshadows the next step as the linking of justice and benefit. He explains Polus’ tactics as an attempt to discover a counter-example which will refute the universal affirmation ‘all just men are happy’. Ol. puts Polus’ example in its historical context.

someone who brings about what he thinks best does not bring about what he wants?' <Socrates said 'Whenever what he thinks best is not beneficial.'><sup>367</sup> So when Polus grants this, they investigate what sort of thing is beneficial. For Socrates declares it is justice, and Polus injustice. One man, you see, identifies one thing with what is beneficial, another man another thing. Someone who lives by pleasure, like Callicles, says pleasure is beneficial.<sup>368</sup> Someone who lives by injustice like Polus, says injustice, and a man who lives by shamelessness says this is, like Thrasymachus. So Socrates will show by a compelling deduction that the just man is happy and that a man without justice is not happy. Note that this is what will be shown throughout this argument:<sup>369</sup> namely, what is beneficial, and what is not.

18.2. So Socrates says 'Every just man is happy'. But note that a universal affirmation can be refuted by even a single particular case that breaks the rule. For instance, I say 'Every human soul is immortal', but if in the case of a single human his soul is shown to be mortal, the postulate fails. Likewise in the case of the universal affirmation that states 'Two sides of every triangle are greater than the remaining one'.<sup>370</sup> And [a universal affirmation] is often refuted, as in the case of the affirmation 'It is its lower jaw that every animal moves'. The crocodile refutes this, because it moves its upper jaw.<sup>371</sup>

So here too when Socrates says 'Every just person is happy', Polus tries—rhetorically and falsely—to refute it by an example.<sup>372</sup> But just as when I say a person is a corpse, it is false—for if it is a corpse, it is not a person—<sup>373</sup> so too when I say 'An orator recog-

<sup>367</sup> Supplied to fill an obvious lacuna by W.

<sup>368</sup> Here we see Ol.'s use of characters as paradigms of people who live certain types of life (cf. 0.1). The theses he attributes to Callicles and Thrasy-machus have more to do with the attitudes which he thinks they adopt than with their declared aims. As a result this is hardly an accurate assessment of Callicles' aspirations (Nb. his protest that some pleasures are better than others at 499b).

<sup>369</sup> Referring to lectures 18-24.

<sup>370</sup> Euclid 1.48.7.

<sup>371</sup> An interesting example of an item of *Egyptian* lore: for which Ol.'s source is not personal knowledge, but Alexandrian platonist tradition (see W.'s citations) that goes back to Arist. *HA* 492b23-24.

<sup>372</sup> See 19.1 below.

<sup>373</sup> Ol. assumes, as stated at the end of *Phd.* 115c and late in the *Alc.*, texts which come before and after *Grg.* in Ol.'s programme of study, that the soul is the true man and that the dead body is not 'man' in any significant sense. The example appears in Arist. *De Int.* 21a21-23 as a case of the predicate

nizes a falsehood'.<sup>374</sup> So [Polus] says 'You are wrong when you say every just person is happy', and he argues this through a syllogism of the third figure, 'Archelaus is unjust, Archelaus is happy, therefore some unjust person is happy'.<sup>375</sup> In this case [Socrates] agrees with one premise *ex hypothesi*, but rejects the other. He says 'If Archelaus is unjust as you say, [then your claim] is impossible—he is not happy'. So Polus says 'What? Do you think he is happy or that he is wretched?' Socrates answers and says 'I do not know, I've never met the man', thereby teaching us that we should not believe what we are told. For what if those who said it, through good will or through hostility towards us, were indulging in praise or criticism? Hence we should hold back, and put it to the test, and only then declare our view.

Polus responds 'What? Don't you think the great king is happy in ruling everyone up to the Chelidonians and Cyanian Isles,<sup>376</sup> as he claims?', Socrates says 'I do not declare a view on this, since I do not yet know how he is placed regarding education and justice'. For it is not a man who rules everyone who is happy, but a man who possesses these two things, knowledge and justice—even if he is poorer than Irus.<sup>377</sup>

Note that man, as we have shown, is neither [his] possessions nor body nor the combination of body and soul, but soul alone, and not all soul at that. For he is not irrational soul, nor the combination of the rational and irrational [soul], but rational [soul] alone, which is the 'self itself'.<sup>378</sup> Surely then, since man is rational soul, and there are two kinds of faculties of the soul, some cognitive, some appetitive, and since we should exercise the cognitive ones with knowledge and the appetitive ones with justice, we cannot then otherwise live happily except by means of these two [knowledge and justice].

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containing a contradiction of the subject.

<sup>374</sup> The implication is that, by definition, no orator (in the popular sense) actually recognizes a falsehood.

<sup>375</sup> This in fact seems to refute the proposition 'every unjust person is unhappy', which is another part of Socrates' thesis at 470e9-11.

<sup>376</sup> An allusion to the western naval boundaries of the Persian empire as determined after the successes of Cimon; they are alluded to by Dem. *On the Embassy* 273, and Plut. *Cimon* 13.4. The latter were two rocky isles at the entrance to the Euxine, and the former a group of isles off Lycia. It is interesting that Ol. in fact uses limits which were agreed to *in defeat* by the King.

<sup>377</sup> The proverbial beggar, from Homer, *Od.* 18.1ff.

<sup>378</sup> Cf. 0.6 etc and *Alc.* 130d; *In Alc.* 9.1-11, 171.10-19W.

18.3. Let that suffice on this matter. Polus sets out the example of Archelaus rather rhetorically, and says 'It's not ancient history that I'll refute you with, since the past is respected with undisputed generosity,<sup>379</sup> but I'll use this more recent case of Archelaus'. We must understand that there were two brothers, Perdiccas and Alcetes, and Perdiccas married his own brother's slave, and had an illegitimate son by her, Archelaus, and by another, lawful wife he had another child, whose name is not preserved, and Alcetes had a son, Alexander. Perdiccas, then, held the office of tyrant, but when he died Archelaus, the son of his uncle's slave, instead of handing over authority to his master and uncle, invited him to dinner, got him drunk, and killed both his uncle and his son Alexander. 'Caring not for the vengeance of the gods',<sup>380</sup> but seizing too the legitimate son of his father, now seven years old, he hurled him into a well and said to Cleopatra that a goose had caused his fall.

After telling this sort of tale about him, Polus states ironically<sup>381</sup> 'This man is wretched by your account, and yet he is thought happy by countless people'.<sup>382</sup> Note that if Archelaus had done everything in an orderly fashion and killed no-one, it would have been just for [Polus] to do these things, since it would be due to [Socrates].<sup>383</sup>

18.4. '**What definition you define**' (470b10): he does not mean [technical] 'definition', but 'description' or 'distinguishing mark'.<sup>384</sup>

18.5. '**No—you answer that, Socrates**' (470b11): unable to answer, he requires Socrates to answer.

18.6. '**Yes, it's hard to refute you**' (470c4): ironical, for he says 'Even a child could easily expose your nonsense. For it's not justice but injustice that makes a man happy'. Socrates does not get angry,

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<sup>379</sup> This sentiment (*De mortuis nil nisi bonum?*), and the phrase 'undisputed generosity', is actually taken from Thucydides 2.45, the Pericles funeral oration. Ol. seems quite mistaken in detecting the idea in *Grg.*, yet it fits his (defensible) view of Plato as one who is much harder on contemporary rhetoric than on the speech-makers of the past.

<sup>380</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.388.

<sup>381</sup> It seems odd, perhaps, for Polus to be 'ironical' or 'sarcastic' (cf. also 18.6, 10-15; 19.11, 13; 20.1), but Ol. is often blind to Socrates' irony.

<sup>382</sup> One should perhaps read <ὕπὸ> τοσοῦτων, since 18.15 and *Grg.* 471e8 seem to establish the sense required.

<sup>383</sup> Placing a comma after αὐτῷ and taking the infinitive with ἦν δίκαιος

<sup>384</sup> Ol. denies that ὅρος here should be taken as ὁρισμός.



but in keeping with his philosophic manner says 'I should be grateful to a child for refuting me, and also regard anyone who converts me as a benefactor'.

18.7. **'And rid me of [a lot of] nonsense'** (470c7): Why does he say '[a lot of] nonsense'? It was not because he said *a lot*.<sup>385</sup> We say that he calls everything odd 'nonsense', whatever it is. So too in the *Phaedo*.<sup>386</sup> So he is saying that [by refuting me] you are doing me a good turn by relieving me of an odd and defective belief.

18.8. **'I suppose you see'** (470d5-6): Since Polus said 'see' instead of 'hear', Socrates says 'Even if I do not see, I certainly do hear'. Even Polus has misused [a term of] sensation.<sup>387</sup>

18.9. **'Man and woman'** (470e10): Man and woman do not differ at all except in the parts [of the body] related to child-bearing. So a woman might often actually be better constituted than a man, so much better as to show manly courage and die [for her country].<sup>388</sup> For we should despise death, and not think that the only good death is one arising from fever!<sup>389</sup> Indeed that is the meaning of Plotinus, too, when, after someone said 'The fellow was slain and died an unnatural death', he remarked 'What pettiness, that men should regard such a death as evil'.<sup>390</sup>

18.10. **'Why, of course he's unjust!'** (471a4): [Polus] conducts the rest of his argument in ironical fashion.

18.11. **'His master and uncle'** (471b1-2): long ago they liked to call their fathers 'God', and in line with this blasphemous usage they called [the father's] brother 'Divine',<sup>391</sup> going by their notion of the father.<sup>392</sup>

<sup>385</sup> The Greek verb *φλυαρεῖν* is being interpreted as having two meanings, (i) to talk in a foolish or peculiar fashion, and (ii) to go on and on about something requiring only brief expression.

<sup>386</sup> See Ol. *In Phd.* 6.7, 101.11-15, on 66c3-4. Compare also 42.8 below.

<sup>387</sup> Ol. speculates, not ineptly, over why the exchange about seeing and hearing occurs. Presumably Polus might have been expected to be accurate on this point, being an orator who carefully chooses his terms.

<sup>388</sup> This would appear to be a general sentiment about females, not wholly reliant on *Rep.* 5 451c-456b, where Plato is not explicit about women Guardians dying for their polis. But Ol. would no doubt look back with pride at the example of Hypatia dying for philosophy.

<sup>389</sup> W. refers to Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.7.27.

<sup>390</sup> W. refers to Plot. *Enn.* 1.4.7.30-31, but the parallel use of *μικρολογία* seems not enough to justify Ol.'s appeal to him here. He also cites Ps.-El. 12.15, but the connexion is very indirect.

<sup>391</sup> The adjective *θεῖος* means 'divine' or 'God-like', the noun *θεῖος* means 'uncle'.

<sup>392</sup> Compare scholion, and also Simpl. *In Epict.* 89.26-31.

18.12. **'Of almost the same age'** (471b4): 'Of almost the same age' (*helikiotes*) is derived from the word 'generation' (*helix*),<sup>393</sup> as in 'Generation delights in generation'.<sup>394</sup>

18.13. **'He became utterly wretched without noticing it'** (471b6-7): he presents the argument ironically throughout.

18.14. **'A boy of about seven'** (471c1-2): he added the number of years, in order to show that the child he slew had done no prior injustice. For what did he know or have the power to do at seven years of age?

18.15. **'And I suppose there is some Athenian'** (471c8): This too is ironical, 'Is there anyone, yourself for a start, who would rather be anyone but Archelaus?'

### Lecture 19<sup>395</sup> (471d3-473b11)

19.1. **'I praised you at the beginning of our discussion (*logos*) too, Polus'** (471d3): when Socrates declares that the unjust man is unhappy, Polus seizes upon it and employs syllogisms of a rhetorical and spurious kind, saying 'Not every unjust man is unhappy'.<sup>396</sup> If anything, then *some* unjust man is unhappy, but not *every* one. For observe Archelaus who is unjust but not unhappy'. And he adds 'I will bring you witnesses saying that he is not unhappy'.

Socrates, then, says 'Take the postulate and compel me with a chain of demonstrative argument to agree that there exists an unjust man who is happy, since we should not believe false witnesses. For the testimony of the many is nothing, if there is no demonstration in its support'. For as he said in the *Alcibiades* (114e), 'if you do not hearken to your own words, do not believe what someone else is saying'. So since Polus had said 'The Athenians

<sup>393</sup> The word ἡλικιώτης derives from ἡλιξ.

<sup>394</sup> A proverb present in *Phdr.* 240c1-2; *Paroimiographi* I 285, II 45.

<sup>395</sup> In lecture 19 Ol. deals with Polus' attempt to establish Archelaus as the archetypal happy criminal, and Socrates' means of resisting it. He makes much of Socrates' rejection of appeals to widespread human belief in favour of listening to one's own dissident inner voice. He discusses the complications that arise from the fact that we are not always punished for our crimes in this existence, however fairly God makes the universe operate; men are left to suffer punishment in future lives at the hands of others who are not attempting to treat them justly; the relative fortunes of criminals (punished and unpunished) and sufferers is discussed.

<sup>396</sup> Ol. is reading 470e9-11 as a universal statement.

also want to be like Archelaus, and hence they testify that he is happy', Socrates says 'If the Athenians in general, or if the whole house of Pericles and all the others,<sup>397</sup> and not only the Athenians but foreigners too, told me this, I would not believe them without a demonstration'. So we are taught here not simply to believe without demonstrative proof, whether the man who testifies is a king or a general or someone of the highest rank.

19.2. We should not, then, believe the many. For if we did believe the many we would end up advocating that the sun is a foot across, whereas it's much bigger than the earth.<sup>398</sup> Hence we should not believe them but rather the demonstrations of the astronomers.<sup>399</sup> That their demonstrations are true is manifest from their predicting eclipses and not being wrong, but predicting the outcome in every case. So we should not believe eyes that lack reason, but rather the knowledgeable and rigorous eye of the soul.

Not only does Socrates show that the unjust man is wretched and unhappy, but also that if there were two tyrants, one always committing injustice, stealing property and killing, but never suffering injustice, while the other committed injustice and also suffered injustice, and saw his children killed, his wife slaughtered and all his property taken away, then the tyrant who also suffers is less wretched than the one who only commits injustice.<sup>400</sup> Likewise a man who is mad but is tied down and cannot do anything untoward is less wretched than one who is mad but is not tied down and inflicts harm.<sup>401</sup>

We need to attend, then, to those who pay the penalty and those who do not. For what happens to the latter is like what happens to those people who see someone deformed lying on a golden bed and dressed in silken clothes or something else luxurious. For just as we think that this man is someone great and physically sound,

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<sup>397</sup> Or possibly 'all the other [families]', referring to the other notables mentioned at 472a5-b3; it is strange that the Athenians generally should be contrasted with some Athenians plus the rest of them, but Ol. seems to have in mind firstly the democratic notion that numbers are authoritative, and next the oligarchic idea that the prestigious people are authoritative.

<sup>398</sup> See Arist. *De An.* 428b3, Heraclitus B3DK (Aet. *Plac.* 2.21.4).

<sup>399</sup> On the status of astronomy and the place of astronomic observation in late Neoplatonism see Siorvanes (1996) 262-316.

<sup>400</sup> Ol. goes beyond *Grg.* insofar as he assumes that *any* suffering is something of a cure.

<sup>401</sup> This agrees well with *Euthd.* 281b-d, where lack of opportunity makes the ignorant less wretched (ἀθλιος, c2).

because his trappings conceal his situation from the outside world, so some think that the tyrant is happy because they are unable to view the state of his soul. So while both the tyrant who commits injustice and the one who suffers it are wretched, the one who commits injustice is more wretched, and the one who suffers it is less, because one who constantly commits it is in an unnatural condition, whereas one who suffers it is being healed, and on being healed is less wretched.<sup>402</sup> 'And if he is healed, how is he wretched?' We say that he is wretched simply because he came to deserve to suffer, but that man is most wretched who commits injustice and does the punishing—something which he for his part does in unjust fashion. For the man who suffers that injustice,<sup>403</sup> even if he seems to be *punished* unjustly, does not *suffer* unjustly, for there is no injustice in the universe. But he certainly committed some prior wrong that we do not know of.<sup>404</sup> The man who commits this injustice is wretched in so far as he is punishing a person as unjustly as is within his power.

19.3. If someone says 'Why is it that God makes one man punish another for having committed some prior injustice, and yet imposes punishment on the punisher on the grounds that he has for his part punished unjustly? For [God] himself ordered that man to punish the other for having committed prior injustice', we reply that we have been given free choice and autonomy. God knew that the person would use the passions he was given for the good in a wicked way, and he uses him as a wicked tool, healing through him someone who has committed prior injustice. But that man is the most wretched because he has used his passions in a wholly wicked manner. Just as the ruler in the city has under him the executioner and uses him as an instrument of death, but,

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<sup>402</sup> It must be kept in mind that Ol. is considering the example of Archelaus' unjust act of murdering Alcetes and Alexander, the rightful heirs to the tyranny in Macedonia (see 18.3, 471bc). Archelaus commits injustice and does not suffer, Alcetes suffers, and not for any unjust act which Archelaus knew of. Therefore Archelaus' act is unjust; but, as the universe is providentially governed, Alcetes is suffering for injustice in a prior existence, and therefore is suffering a just death after all.

<sup>403</sup> The text has 'unjustly suffers', but W. deletes 'unjustly' (ἀδίκως).

<sup>404</sup> On the theory that 'injustices' received are only retribution for crimes of a previous life see 17.2, where it applies even to Socrates. However, it is not clear that προμαρτάνω must refer to crimes of a prior existence: it is sufficient for the argument that the crimes should be unrelated to the act of (attempted) injustice.

if he knows that he did something too vindictive for an executioner, he punishes him, so too the creator gave man the passions in order that he might use his temper and desire for good, but since he used them beyond what is appropriate he punishes him.

If someone says 'How is it that a man who commits injustice endures no burden, but on the contrary says what he likes and enriches himself and gets his hands on everything and is honoured?', reply that God seeks the right time, with a view to the beneficial. For just as a doctor does not immediately heal someone suffering from an eye sickness, but waits until he sees the eye liquid has set and as long as a period of delay aims at benefit, not at harm, so too God leaves a man for a greater chastisement.

If someone says 'Although committing injustice, the fellow fares well', do not believe that this is well-being, but reply 'He acted well in a previous life, and that is why he is deemed worthy of rewards' or 'This is not true well-being, and something bad will happen to him in any event, at a time when [God] knows it is beneficial'.

19.4. **'I praised you'** (471d3-4): for in truth he did praise the composition of his speech and the exalted diction of the narrative about Archelaus. However, he criticizes him for not knowing how to conduct a discussion, that is, for not knowing dialectical and demonstrative theory.

19.5. **'And now is this'** (471d5): meaning 'The speech you have just delivered is beside the point and not relevant to what you said earlier, namely that even a child could refute me if I said this'.

19.6. **'For sometimes someone might actually be beaten by many'** (472a1): 'by many' is correct and not 'by all'. For it is not possible for all to be completely false witnesses, for the good is not totally eclipsed.<sup>405</sup>

19.7. **'In the precinct of Dionysus'** (472a7): these were so famous that they stood in the temple. He wants to show that however famous they are, we should not believe them without due examination.

19.8. **'The whole house of Pericles'** (472b2): he did not say 'Pericles' but 'the whole house of Pericles', since [Pericles] was dead.

19.9. **'For you don't compel me'** (472b4): observe how he calls demonstrative proof 'necessity'.

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<sup>405</sup> Reading ἐκλέλοιπεν, with Norvin. There seems to be a misprint in W.

19.10. **'To dislodge me from my property'** (472b5-6): he referred to property as 'substance' because in the courts they delivered judgements about substance in the sense of money and such. Properly, however, Socrates calls reality 'substance'.<sup>406</sup>

19.11. **'No Polus, it's impossible'**<sup>407</sup> (473b10): because Polus had said 'It is difficult<sup>408</sup> to refute you', Socrates says 'It is difficult, because it is impossible'. For Polus ironically said 'difficult' instead of 'easy'.<sup>409</sup> However, Socrates reverses the meaning and says 'Refutation is difficult, because it is impossible'.

19.12. **'For I regard you as a friend'** (473a3): Socrates regards Polus as a friend, not because they hold the same views, but because through goodwill he loves him as a human being.<sup>410</sup>

19.13. **'Oh, that's even harder to refute than the first claim was, Socrates'** (473b8): again ironical: i.e. 'This I can refute still more'.

19.14. **'For what's true is never refuted'** (473b10): 'For truth is never shaken by examination, but forever remains firm on its own foundations'.<sup>411</sup>

19.15. **'You think that a man who does injustice and is unjust is capable'** (472d-473b11): Socrates recapitulates what has already been said more expansively. First, for the benefit of our memory—for what is spelled out expansively leads to clarity, whereas what is stated briefly and as main points tends to bind the memory. Second, for the sake of Polus too, so that he can understand what Socrates is saying, so that it may suffice for him, and so that he will not proceed to draw false inferences from what Socrates has not said. For earlier in the discussion, Polus often took as conceded things Socrates had not conceded. He is thus forced to repeat

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<sup>406</sup> I.e. he calls ἀλήθεια οὐσία: obviously this connexion, made also by the scholiast, is a natural one for a Neoplatonist who will associate both with the realm of the intellect. It is more difficult, however, to find Platonic passages (with Socrates speaking) to bear out Ol.'s claims, *Phdr.* 247c being the most obvious, with some confirmation from *Rep.* 509b and *Phd.* 76d.

<sup>407</sup> This lemma is wrongly placed in the MS, and it may be that the lecturer, reading 'But I say it's impossible' at 472d6, mistook this for the point where his remark was to be made. At 19.15 we appear again to have a misplaced lemma, but this is a retrospective comment on the whole passage from 472d to 473b.

<sup>408</sup> As may be seen from 470c4, one should delete the negative at 110.19W.

<sup>409</sup> 470c4: on Polus' irony see on 18.2.

<sup>410</sup> On Socratic goodwill, cf. 0.3.

<sup>411</sup> W. asks *num fragmentum anapaesticum*, to which Kannicht replies (on *fr. trag. adesp.* 323aa) *sed neque numeros neque dialectum facile restituas; subesse vid. locus poetae in prosam conversus*.

himself so that Polus may know precisely what he has conceded and will not mislead himself (for he cannot mislead Socrates) by adopting premises Socrates has not agreed to.

### Lecture 20<sup>412</sup> (473b12-474b6)

20.1. ‘What do you say?’ (473b12): when Socrates said that someone who commits injustice and suffers [punishment] is less wretched than someone who commits injustice and does not suffer [punishment], Polus replied, ironically,<sup>413</sup> ‘It is difficult to refute you’, and Socrates employed the figure ‘reversal of implication’<sup>414</sup> and said ‘Not difficult but impossible’. Next Polus, beginning with a [would-be] tyrant who is caught, catalogues his misfortunes in the manner of rhetorical proof, magnifying them in scale and variety, and also the deeds of an unjust man who is not captured. And he says ‘How can you call a man who suffers such things happy, and one who escapes them unfortunate?’ And note that he infers something that Socrates did not say. For [Socrates] did not say that he was happy, but that he was less wretched. And it is worth inquiring why it is not the case that, just as with evil there is greater and less (as the poet also claims, ‘It would be a better evil’),<sup>415</sup> so in the case of the happy we speak also of ‘less happy’. We say that well-being is the greatest good, and in the greatest [good] there is no room for more and less.<sup>416</sup>

20.2. Then, when Socrates invites a challenge, Polus calls the many to witness, acting wrongly. For we should construct demonstrative arguments and not [argue] by appeal to the mob.<sup>417</sup> So Socrates says ‘I am not one of the statesmen,’—that is, one of the run-of-the-mill kind—‘for example I was laughed at some time ago over the counting of the votes.’ Note that the Athenians had ten tribes and one of them in turn held the presidency. [The

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<sup>412</sup> Lecture 20 contains no single major topic. Ol. continues to catalogue Polus’ errors: his tactics, his inferences, and his refusal to listen to the inner voice of his common notions.

<sup>413</sup> For Polus’ irony see on 18.2.

<sup>414</sup> See Carbonara Naddei on schol. 473b: ‘contro la supposizione’.

<sup>415</sup> *Iliad* 17.105 (it would be the best of evils) with two significant textual differences.

<sup>416</sup> Here we may detect the influence of *Phlb.* 24cd etc., cf. Arist. *EN* 10.3.2 (Speusippus?).

<sup>417</sup> After this in the manuscript occurs a sentence which belongs at the end of 20.3. It is odd that this was not noticed by earlier editors.

presidents] used to count the votes of the tribe, how many were white, and how many were black. So Socrates says 'Some time ago when I was in charge of the vote I cared so little about it that I did not know how many were white and how many were black. And as a result they laughed at me because I did not wish to communicate with the mob',<sup>418</sup> And yet in the *Clitopho* (407b1) he does communicate with them, saying 'Men, where are you going?' We say that it is possible also to communicate in the manner of an advisor. So he does not communicate [with them] demonstratively but in an advisory manner. The many are unable to listen to a demonstration, since they don't stick to one subject, but each of them has his own ideas. So how is it possible to employ a demonstration without it being on some single topic?<sup>419</sup>

So Polus says 'It is better to commit injustice only and not to suffer injustice'. To which Socrates says 'You too, Polus, and indeed everyone, not just me, know that to suffer injustice is better than to commit injustice'. It is worth inquiring why [Socrates] says this. For Polus says committing injustice is better than suffering it. We say that all of us pursue the good in accordance with a common notion. 'So if, Polus,' [Socrates] says, 'you and all like you follow the common notions, then they will embrace the good and would prefer to suffer injustice rather than to commit it'.

20.3. **'You're trying to scare me with bogeymen this time'** (473d3): [Socrates] excuses himself by saying 'You are trying to scare me with bogeymen', that is, 'You frighten me like a child and decline to examine me'. <That's why divine sayings and powerful charms are handed down, things which are able to put our passions to sleep and to say to us 'Remain undisturbed in your bed' ><sup>420</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> The verb used is the ordinary term for a Socratic conversation (διαλέγεσθαι), but in its first occurrence here it must mean 'take note of the views of' as by holding an election. However later in the passage it must also cover quite authoritative encounters between teacher and pupil.

<sup>419</sup> The point of this obscure passage seems to be that whereas demonstration will start from an agreed definition, the mob will always talk at cross purposes.

<sup>420</sup> The sentence is added from early in 20.2, where it clearly does not belong. We have in fact a comment on the bogey-like effect of Polus' rhetoric, a comment prompted by *Phaedo* 77e-78a—where a lacuna unfortunately occurs in the *Phaedo*-commentary. That passage contains the term μορμολύκεια, the notion of the 'child within us', and reference to the charmer (ἐπιδόξ). The quotation is from Euripides *Orestes* 258.



20.4. **'Just now you were calling witnesses'** (473d4): that is, 'you offered me the Athenians as witnesses'.

20.5. **'What's this, Polus? You're laughing?'** (473e2): Polus laughed at this point. So Socrates asks 'Is laughing an alternative form of refuting and are you refuting through laughter?' Note that there is a saying of Gorgias, giving the instruction: 'If your opponent speaks seriously, laugh, and you will defeat him. If he laughs when you are speaking seriously, exert yourself in order that his laughter should not be noticed'.<sup>421</sup> So it was as a student of Gorgias that Polus laughed.

20.6. **'That not a single man would say'** (473e5): note how he applies the testimony to mankind at large.

20.7. **'For I know how to produce just one witness'** (474a5): note his 'I know', whereby he shows that it is not possible to converse in knowledgeable fashion with the many, but that one witness following common notions is great [support]. Hence also Heraclitus (B49DK) said '[Let there be] one man for me in place of many, and I say this even in the realm of Persephone'.

20.8. **'And I think that I don't'** (474b6): [Socrates] says at length to Polus 'Neither you nor anyone else wishes to commit injustice', in order that Polus, by exerting himself more, should appreciate a perfect dialectical conversation with Socrates.

## Lecture 21<sup>422</sup> (474c-476a)

21.1. **'Well then, so that you'll know, tell me this'** (474c): the purpose here is to argue the two theses that Socrates has proposed. The first of these is that it is better to suffer injustice than to do injustice to another, the second that, of those who commit injustice, a man who does not pay the penalty is far more wretched than one who suffers it. And this is shown, as has been said in the *Alcibiades*,<sup>423</sup> as a result of the correspondence in actions of the just, the good and

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<sup>421</sup> For Gorgias on laughter and seriousness, see Arist. *Rh.* 3.18.7, = Gorgias B12 DK.. This parody seems an appropriately Platonic device for Ol. to have noticed.

<sup>422</sup> Lecture 21 deals with Socrates' account of 'the fine'. Ol. begins by reminding us of the theses which need to be proven: that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it, and that it is better, having done it, to pay the penalty than to escape it. The first of these is to be demonstrated within the passage tackled by this lecture.

<sup>423</sup> Cf. 5.2 above, *Alc.* 115a-116d, *In Alc.* 126.4-20.

the fine. Polus, following the common notions without consistency,<sup>424</sup> agrees that what is just is fine, but no longer grants that what is fine is good. Instead he resists this. Callicles agrees with neither postulate. So Polus says that the just is fine—as is evidenced by our pitying those who suffer injustice, so base is committing injustice—but no longer that it is good. For when the just man can cheat men of money and gain a great deal, he gains nothing because he is just. But Socrates consistently says that in actions everything that is just is fine, and everything that is fine is good, and hence that everything that is just is good. And so the same applies to their opposites too: all that's unjust is base, and all that's base bad, so all that's unjust is bad.

21.2. That is what *they* say. But Callicles, who does not even know whether there *are* common notions,<sup>425</sup> says neither of these things: the just is not fine, nor is the fine good. Because he suffers from a lack of rationality, he presents examples from the non-rational sphere, saying that in every case the stronger man is bound to come off better than the weaker man and to subdue him. That's how it is among irrational animals, too, that stronger ones have power over weaker ones and look after themselves. It certainly does not make a lion just if he does not eat creatures weaker than himself. Therefore [Callicles] says that the weaker try to bewitch and cheat the stronger, and tell them that justice is fine, injustice base, the fine good and the base bad, so that as a result of this flattery they may make the stronger need them. That is Callicles' position. How he will be refuted we shall learn in the course of the debate with him.

Observe that Socrates does not address all his arguments to a single individual, for then characters would be espousing contrary views, but he assumes that Gorgias accepts the three [equations], Polus one of them (namely that all that is just is fine), and that Callias says none of them is true.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> On the part played by the common notions see Tarrant (1997b); for Polus' limited cognizance of them and Callicles' ignorance see 25.1-2.

<sup>425</sup> Ol. is being observant here. Callicles writes off the general consensus of mankind as (unnatural) *nomos* and contrasts it unfavourably with the natural state of affairs. For Ol., as for Plato, *nomos* is rooted in nature—in the natural common notions, as he believes.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. 10.1 below, which determines the sense of some rather elliptical Greek here.

Since he uses comparative terms, saying 'worse' and 'baser', we should change these to simple adjectives, to 'bad' and 'base', and construct the argument with these, and then go back and construe it with comparatives.

21.3. But since these are terms of privation, bad and base, we should go through the whole exercise in terms of [positive] states, good and fine, so that from the good and fine we may proceed to the bad and base, and so to the worse and the baser.

The fine, then, is twofold, aimed at either pleasure or usefulness. For instance I call a house fine which contains wonderful works of marble and great comeliness, but which does not enjoy any breeze. This is called fine *qua* pleasant, not *qua* useful. If on the contrary [a house] is unattractive but catches the breeze, it is called fine, but *qua* useful, not *qua* pleasant. But if it is blessed with both features, then it is fine *qua* pleasant and also *qua* useful. It is the same in the case of a slave and other things. For if one's servant is merely comely, not loyal, he is fine only *qua* pleasant. And if he is loyal but ugly, then he is fine *qua* useful. If he has both qualities, he is fine *qua* pleasant and *qua* useful.<sup>427</sup> And generally speaking, as Socrates remarks, you can discover this [situation] in the case of bodies, in colours, in voices, in pursuits, in laws, and in mathematics.<sup>428</sup>

21.4. And observe the arrangement. [Socrates] first referred to bodies, then colours—colours are in bodies but are non-bodily, and some of them are simply pleasant, while some are also of use, e.g. for eye-sickness, for dark colour is then a thing that is fine. Then after colours come sounds, which may be either pleasant or beneficial (i.e. useful), pleasant like the voices of tragic performers, beneficial like warning voices that hold the passions in check. Sounds come after colours, since they belong to the soul too. Next come pursuits and laws. For if the soul devotes itself to things of a lower level and concerns itself with them, it makes laws, whereas if it attends to itself, it makes <pursuits<sup>429</sup> .... Then come> mathematics.

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<sup>427</sup> It is noteworthy that Ol. does not choose any examples from *Hippias Major*. One may question whether he actually knows the work, though he is familiar with much that lies outside the Neoplatonic corpus (e.g. *Clitophon*, 20.2).

<sup>428</sup> Plato's word μαθήματα need mean no more than 'things for learning', but it seems from Ol.'s allusion to *Rep.* 526b (below) that he understands the narrower sense of the term at 475a.

<sup>429</sup> There are five reasons for assuming a lacuna here: (i) Ol.'s text refers

For [mathematics] benefit our soul, and, as Plato says (*Rep.* 526b), where they do not give us any other benefit, they are extremely beneficial in making the soul sharper. But we must understand that they are also beneficial for life. For when geometry sees fit to occupy itself with matter, that is the origin of mechanics, which receives glory and profit from the works that it produces. So what is fine is either so *qua* pleasant or *qua* useful.

21.5. Note that what is truly fine is always beneficial and aims at the best of pleasure. For as he says in the *Laws*, it is actually called 'fine', because it is the object of desire and 'summons' everyone to itself.<sup>430</sup> For it is [located] at the very porch of the good,<sup>431</sup> which is above all things, so that the fine is the object of desire because it lies close to the good and involves the best of pleasure. Plato refers to this when discussing music. For he says that music should employ *due proportion*, and if it lacks due proportion, then let its pleasure be one that is not disorderly but which resembles due proportion.<sup>432</sup> So since the fine is either pleasant or beneficial, we should note that its opposite, the base, is either painful or harmful or both. 'So since you admit that to commit injustice is base, Polus, it is clear that it is either painful or harmful or both. But it's not painful, because we do not feel pain on account of the wrongdoer but on account of the victim.'<sup>433</sup> Yet neither is it both. For quite simply, if it is not painful, then neither is it both [painful and harmful]. It remains therefore that it should be harmful. Hence committing injustice is harmful, what is harmful is bad,<sup>434</sup> and therefore injustice is bad.'

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only to laws here, dropping pursuits; (ii) it would be characteristic of Ol. to want to give some reason why Plato often refers to laws & pursuits as if they were related but distinct concepts; (iii) Ol. fails to show how laws and pursuits can be both aesthetically and practically 'fine'; (iv) ποιεῖ τὰ μαθήματα is an odd expression for doing mathematics; (v) it seems odd to say (roughly): 'the soul does mathematics, for these benefit the soul'.

<sup>430</sup> I.e. what's fine (τὸ καλόν) derives from that which summons (τὸ καλοῦν). W. refers to *Laws* 732d-734e but this hardly suffices to explain the reference; another inexact Platonic parallel here is *Crat.* 416b-d; for Neo-platonic parallels see W.

<sup>431</sup> The expression ἐν προθύροις τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ comes from *Phlb.* 64c1, but this is interpreted by Ol. as a reference to the second level of good at 66b, which includes what is fine. See also the notion that the fine leads to the good at *Hp.Ma.* 296e ff.

<sup>432</sup> Cf. *Laws* 667b-668b, 802a-d.

<sup>433</sup> This seems to be a reference to feelings of empathy, introducing the extra perspective of the third party, but the text may be at fault.

<sup>434</sup> Reading κακόν rather than κάκιον for the sake of the argument's

It is worth inquiring in what sense Socrates claims that someone who commits injustice causes pain, whereas someone who suffers injustice is pained and deserves pain.<sup>435</sup> 'What? If he is a sage, is he pained?' We say that it is one thing to inquire into a thing in itself and another [to inquire into it] incidentally. Observe: I say that the line does and does not have points as its limits—for I say that a straight line has them, whereas a circular one does not, seeing that a circle has no beginning. So when I say that it does not have [a beginning], I am not investigating it *qua* line, pure and simple, but as one with a particular quality, as such-and-such a line, since a line does have [a beginning]. It is the same in the present case: insofar as that the wronged man suffers injustice he is also pained, but insofar as he is a sage who overcomes his passions he is not pained.<sup>436</sup> Hence one who suffers injustice is pained *qua* sufferer of injustice. Non-sages are surely pained in this same way. And besides, Socrates himself said that it is fine neither to commit injustice nor to suffer injustice, but that if one must, then it is better to suffer injustice than to commit injustice.

21.6. Now when Socrates has demonstrated this, Polus begins to hesitate and stumble. So Socrates says to him 'Don't hesitate and give in to the passion that children experience when they do go to the doctor to be healed, and do so in tears. No, take heart, it is a fine thing for you to be benefited and not to pay attention to the multitude and their testimony. It was for this reason that I said to you

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coherence.

<sup>435</sup> Ol. seems to be searching for an excuse to bring in observations on the topos of the sage's experiencing pain, a possibility denied by the Stoics (SVF 1.210-212, 3.378ff.), whose moral theory exercises a surprising influence in these chapters. For a further passage which assumes the sage's freedom from emotions see 22.2 below. The question of what the sufferer deserves to suffer arises not from Plato, but from Ol.'s conviction that the universe ultimately operates according to just principles, see 17.2. The paradox of the sage suffering pain is all the greater if that also means that he deserves pain—as it does even for Socrates!

<sup>436</sup> At first sight this seems a distinctly unsatisfying answer to a problem which Ol. has *chosen* to introduce; but the key point is that the term 'be pained' ought to have both a middle and a passive sense. Pain can be inflicted on the sage by the actions of another, but he cannot pain himself with inner anguish as well. He can have the *sensation* of pain, but not the *passion*—for it is the passions which the sage is held incapable of succumbing to. Pleasure is treated by the Stoics in a similar double fashion: *qua* passion, an impulse taken to excess, it is a sign of vice and folly which should be shunned, yet *qua* sensation it is something indifferent.

just now that you and I and all of us know that it is better to be suffer injustice than to commit injustice, if we pay heed to the common notions.<sup>437</sup> Now Polus is unwilling to agree to the truth [of this], but is unable to refute it, and says 'This argument that you have just used points to this, but there are other arguments which will overturn you.' Note that it is impossible to find [any such arguments], for the truth is never refuted.<sup>438</sup>

21.7. **'Indeed, you're defining finely now'** (475a2-3): because Socrates characterized the fine using pleasure, Polus thought of his own undisciplined pleasure, and accepted [the definition], but Socrates meant the best kind.

21.8. **'And surely also when I define the shameful'** (475a4): 'If the fine is opposite of the base, and is either pleasant or beneficial, then the base too is either painful or harmful. For there is a rule that states 'As one thing stands to another, so does the former's opposite stand to the latter's'. But perhaps someone will [seek to] overturn this by saying 'See how sickness makes an athlete lose. If health is the opposite of sickness and winning [the opposite] of losing, then health will bring him victory. Yet he does not always win when he's healthy'. We reply that if you take sickness to be in itself the cause of defeat, then health too does in all cases cause victory. But as things are, besides sickness the fact that one's rival is stronger contributes to one's defeat. So this rule was true.

21.9. **'Well, no; I wouldn't choose it'** (475e1): i.e. 'How could I accept this? For neither could anyone else be persuaded by this argument, because there are arguments that overturn and oppose it'. Observe that there is no argument to oppose it, since no good is opposed to a good. For bad is opposed to bad, and bad is opposed to good, but good is never opposed to good.

21.10. **'You see, then, Polus'** (475e7): 'You see that the proof that comes from within ourselves is far superior to that [which comes from] from the mob? It is enough for me that you should agree for everybody.'

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<sup>437</sup> Cf. 20.2 above.

<sup>438</sup> For this conviction cf. 21.9 below. One might compare *Euthd.* 286e2-4, 287e4-5.

**Lecture 22<sup>439</sup> (476a2-477a8)**

22.1. ‘Well, let us take this to be so’ (476a2): Socrates had advanced two theses, the first that it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it, the second that of those who commit injustice someone who suffers and submits himself to punishment is less wretched than the unjust man who suffers nothing and remains for ever unjust. The first of these has been demonstrated, and now the second is argued, i.e. that someone who has committed injustice and as a result is justly punished is less wretched, for he is benefited.

So [Socrates] considers doing and suffering, and says ‘As the agent acts, so the patient suffers. If something that burns burns strongly, the thing that is burnt is burnt strongly. If the one burns deeply, the other is burnt deeply, if the one [burns] superficially, the other [is burnt] superficially. He rehearses the argument first regarding the agent and then passes on to the sufferer, because demonstrations are derived from causes and not effects. He says ‘A man who punishes justly acts finely—for this is something, Polus, you agree, namely that the just is fine—so a man who punishes justly acts finely. Hence a man who is punished justly is finely punished. And the fine aims at pleasure or benefit, or both. Now punishment is not pleasant to someone who is punished, nor is it both [pleasant and beneficial], seeing that it’s not pleasant at all. It remains that it is beneficial. Therefore a man who is punished justly is benefited, and if he is benefited, he is less wretched, for he has been held to deserve healing.’<sup>440</sup> Next [Socrates] will show that [this man] is benefited, not by financial benefits or benefit to the body, but by benefit to the soul. He will show again, by a different argument, that the greatest benefit is observed in the case of the soul, because the greatest problem concerns the soul.

So [Socrates] must show that it’s the man who is justly punished

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<sup>439</sup> In lecture 22 Ol. comments on the arguments that it is better to be subjected to the appropriate punishment, and that it is the soul in particular which benefits. He considers how punishment may be just (hence fine, hence pleasant and/or beneficial; but not pleasant, hence beneficial), and an objection, based on the example of insults, against the notion that the patient suffers in the same manner as that in which the agent acts.

<sup>440</sup> I.e. the providential forces of the universe, which treat all according to their deserts, κατ’ ἀξίαν (see 17.2), have judged him to be among curable sinners.

who is said to be punished.<sup>441</sup> For someone who is unjustly punished should not even be described as being punished, for punishment is so called from the restraining of the passions.<sup>442</sup> Hence someone who is justly punished is described as being punished because of his passions, since his passions are restrained. Someone who, on the other hand, does not have passions but undergoes something unjustly is not said to be punished. For he simply did not have passions, so what needs restraining?

22.2. It is worth asking why Socrates says that we see the patient suffering in the same fashion as the agent acts. For we observe that if someone insulted a sage, an insult would have operated, but [the sage] would have suffered nothing, for he is contemptuous of [insults].<sup>443</sup> So it was when someone insulted Diogenes, and another said to him 'Diogenes, this man is insulting you', and Diogenes said 'I am neither insulted nor derided'.<sup>444</sup> What are we to say? That in truth the insult did not operate. For he tried to insult him, but because the insult was false, he was not able to achieve it. For the insult operates by [the person's] being conscious of the insults used applying to *him*, and in that case the person justly insulted assuredly suffers, unless he is quite insensitive. If he *is* insensitive, then even when he is justly insulted he does not suffer.

If someone says 'Suppose someone had been shamefully constituted,<sup>445</sup> but at the time that he is insulted he is of a temperate disposition, does he suffer or not?', let him be told that he does not suffer. For whereas the insulter is criticising what was done before, the one insulted does not suffer, since he knows that, since repenting, he no longer has any association with what's bad.<sup>446</sup>

<sup>441</sup> For punishment, in order to be beneficial, must be fine but not pleasant, and to be fine it must be just.

<sup>442</sup> I.e. κόλασις gets its name from the verb κολούειν. One should observe here that 'passion' translates πάθος, and that it is the Stoic sense of the word that is applicable: a 'passion' is an impulse which has got out of control, SVF 1.205ff., 3.377ff.

<sup>443</sup> For similar material on the sage being unaffected (in that case by pain) see 21.5 above.

<sup>444</sup> See DL 6.54 for a simpler but similar tale.

<sup>445</sup> There was some uncertainty among translators about the exact force of the verb here. In view of the parallel use of διακείμενος it seems that the verb πολιτεύεσθαι is being used of a person's inner 'constitution', but it might be interpreted as 'played a disgraceful role in his polis', cf. DL 6.20, where we are told that Diogenes confessed he had adulterated the coinage at Sinope.

<sup>446</sup> Note Ol.'s theory of repentance and absolution: perhaps a sign of Christian influence, but a natural extension of the notion found in Plato: if corrective measures externally imposed can cleanse one's soul of guilt, then



22.3. **‘Must there also be something affected?’** (476b4): note that Aristotle in the *Categories* (7, 6a36-b11) says there are two ways of characterizing relatives. The first way is that a relative is what is spoken of with reference to another thing, for example, left is said to be left in relation to the right, and a slave [is said to be a slave] in relation to his master. The second way is that a relative is what exists in relation to something else, not that it is spoken of with reference to something else. For if we say ‘spoken of’, substances would be included (for a head is said to be someone’s head), whereas the relative in the proper sense is what ‘exists in relation to another thing’. Some commentators who do not understand matters pertaining to Plato say [Aristotle] received the first from Plato, for Plato characterizes the relative according to what is said and not in accordance with substance.<sup>447</sup> Reflect, then, that while we can prove from many other [passages] that he did not think this, but that he anticipated Aristotle<sup>448</sup> in applying [the relative] to substance, we may especially do so from what’s said here: for [Socrates] did not say ‘If there is an agent, it is necessary also that a patient *be spoken of*’, but ‘It is necessary also that there *should be* a patient’, so that the agent may be an agent *for a patient*. So accept the demonstration provided for you here.

22.4. **‘Then the man who pays justice is rid of evil of soul?’** (477a7): he has shown then that someone who is justly punished is punished for his benefit, for someone who punishes such a man removes evil from the soul. If, then, someone who pays the penalty justly is healed, how can we fail to describe him as less wretched than a man who suffers nothing at all and is forever unjust to others?<sup>449</sup>

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perhaps self-imposed one’s can too.

<sup>447</sup> This passage shows the level of debate which went on about the *Categories* in antiquity. W. cites, on the side of those who make the correction, Amm. *In Cat.* 70.9-14 (who relies on this passage of *Grg.*) and Philop. *In Cat.* 109.26-31. Among those who make the mistake he cites Porphyry, Elias, and Boethius as well as Ol. *In Cat.* 112.19-113.15, but this last is in fact a complex discussion of the issue in the wake of Ammonius, not an example of the failure to notice what Ol. has noticed here.

<sup>448</sup> For anticipation of Aristotle see also 3.7, 31.8, 43.8.

<sup>449</sup> Note that there is no discussion of someone who does not submit to punishment but nevertheless reforms. Yet it is doubtful whether Ol. thinks purification cannot occur except by punishment (in this life or another) for he speaks as if repentance is sufficient at the end of 22.2; the passages can be reconciled if repentance *involves* mental suffering. Repentance will now become an important topic of lecture 23.

**Lecture 23** <sup>450</sup> (477a8-479e8)

23.1. 'Then is he rid of the greatest evil?' (477a8): [Socrates] has shown in what went before that it is more important for a man who commits injustice to pay the penalty than not to. And so now he wants to show what is the greatest evil, which the one who pays the penalty is rid of. So he says 'Let us consider those areas where evils are found, and we shall discover what we are looking for. There are these three: *external things, the body, the soul*. For possessions, poverty is regarded as an evil; for the body, sickness, weakness, ugliness—sickness when the four elements are in discord, weakness when the homoiomerous [parts] are not in good condition, ugliness when the components are badly fitted together; for the soul, injustice and suchlike.

Now which is the greatest evil here and [most] despised by us—the one seen as [most] fit to be shunned? Is it poverty? By no means. For indeed we give aid to those in need and pity them. In the same way we aim to heal the sick. It is only those who live with evil in their soul that we shun and regard as bad, so that the greatest evil is the one concerning the soul. So since someone who commits injustice but does not pay the penalty harms his own soul, he acquires the greatest evil. So it is harmful not to pay the penalty. And then since 'the greatest' has a broad range—for it [can signify what is] greatest by a lesser or a large amount—Socrates inquires to what extent it is the greatest harm, and says that it is inexpressibly harmful.<sup>451</sup>

23.2. This is established in the following way. Note that if we take a parallelogram of 64 units, so that one side is 16 and the other 4, then invariably the amount by which the side of 16 is greater than the side of 4 is the same as the amount by which the shorter

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<sup>450</sup> Lecture 23 concerns the exceedingly harmful nature of injustice. Ol. praises Plato for not relying on the normal threats of ill-repute and punishment (here *or* in the afterlife) to deter us from injustice, but for actually trying to demonstrate a direct connexion between acts of injustice and an inner condition which destroys our well-being. In the 'lexis' Ol. shows himself very aware of the need to evaluate the life in which injustice is followed by late repentance, possibly under the influence of Christian ideas on the efficacy of repentance; he resists the idea that repentance is any adequate substitute for keeping our hands clean in the first place.

<sup>451</sup> In order to understand what follows it is important to note that Ol.'s ἄφατον βλάβερον corresponds to Plato's ὑπερφυεῖ ... βλάβη καὶ κακῶ θάυμασιφ at 477d.



possess unity.<sup>453</sup> But if you hate someone, and you see him committing injustice, profiteering, and doing all the things that lead to luxury, then pray that he does not pay the penalty, for then he will in truth be more wretched. But if you love him, then try [to get him to pay the penalty], for the luxury which is surfacing is the cause of much evil for him.'

23.3. Notice how divinely [Socrates] establishes that evil of the soul is the greatest evil. For some, wishing us to come to the good, since they know that we easily incline toward evil, use public ill-repute as a disincentive for us. They say 'Do not commit injustice, do not kill, since you will acquire ill-repute'. Then again they claim confirmation from the laws, saying 'If you commit injustice, the laws will summon you for punishment'. And also from the places of punishment beneath the earth, for they say 'Pyriphlegethon and Acheron and Kokytos exist and you will be punished in these [places]'.

Note however that there are some who undermine this, saying 'Yes, committing injustice with the consequence of being detected and becoming of ill-repute is evil. So we should commit injustice in such a way as not to be condemned, but to appear in our wickedness to be achieving some good, so that by committing injustice with cunning we escape the laws'. And again they say 'From what [evidence] is it clear that there are places of punishment beneath the earth? Who brought that information? Who came [here] from there? But if they do in truth exist, then let us give a little cash to those in need by way of atonement, and no longer shall we suffer anything from God'.<sup>454</sup>

So Plato, who is familiar with these foolish objections, proves his point admirably through other means and not by these. For he says 'Let us strive to avoid wickedness just for our own good'. And he takes sickness and says 'We pursue health and avoid sickness. Why? Is it for any other reason than for our own sakes, in order

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<sup>453</sup> This sentence seems to have been introduced as a means of qualifying the statements of Socrates about enemies at 480e-481a, which seem a little too malicious to be typical of Socrates or to satisfy the Christian taste for universal love and brotherhood (cf. also 24.1). It recalls the theme of justice as a unifying force in the *Republic*, e.g. 1.351d-352a, and the theme prominent in *Crito* and *Rep.* 1 that enemies should not be wronged.

<sup>454</sup> The judgement-processes that Ol. speaks of are pagan, but one suspects, with Westerink (1990) xxx, that he has certain Christian ideas of repentance and salvation in mind.

for us to be healthy? For instance it is only to children and to men of infantile intelligence that we say 'If you are not prepared to undergo surgery, you will die'; for those of sound mind act on their own initiative, and endure anything for the sake of health'.

So in this context let us too imagine that there exist no places of punishment—even though their existence is established in the *Phaedo* (108e ff.)—and that there are no laws and no ill-repute nor anything of that sort: ought we not to pursue virtue just for the sake of the good itself? For even if a man who commits injustice has nothing to endure, the soul that commits injustice is always by that very fact in an unnatural condition, and that is sufficient for it to have the greatest evil. So we ought always to pursue virtue simply for the sake of the good of the soul. For injustice always harms our very selves, for we are placed in a condition contrary to nature.<sup>455</sup>

23.4. **'In the condition of his possessions do you see any other evil state of a man'** (477b1): since 'evil' is a term properly applied to the soul, and since now [Socrates] has employed the word with reference to possessions, he was not satisfied with saying 'possessions' but added 'of a man', to show that wickedness is not so much a matter of possessions as of a man—and that is the same as saying 'of a soul'.<sup>456</sup>

23.5. **'Since it doesn't exceed in pain, on your account'** (477e2): that is, 'as you also agreed'. For [Socrates] does not say 'I do not posit it, but you say it', for he himself accepts this point. And Polus does not object, but agrees that it is so.

**And the administration of justice rids us of intemperance and injustice?** (478b1): so paying the penalty is most fine, since it rids us of harm and heals the soul. So if the poor man who learns money-making and the sick man who returns to health enjoy

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<sup>455</sup> Ol. may appear to be adopting an allegorical reading of the Platonic tales of punishment, but it is rather perhaps an alternative reading. That injustice does not pay *even in this life* is a prominent theme in *Republic* books IX and X, but the notion that it puts us in a state contrary to nature sounds more in tune with philosophies like cynicism and stoicism which made the goal 'life in accordance with nature'; in Platonism it appears rather to be *pain* that is a deviation from the natural state, and it would scarcely suit Ol. (or *Grg.*) if injustice were *per se* a pain. Rather Ol. is conceiving of injustice as upsetting the natural unified balance of the soul's constitution, as well as seeing it in terms of the unnatural excesses of the Stoic *pathe*, and so slipping further into Stoic-Platonic syncretism.

<sup>456</sup> Cf. 0.6 above.

fine things, then so much more the soul that proceeds to the better earns the greatest prizes. If someone says 'Why do we heal the sick, for we ought to leave such a man alone, to be punished for his faults?', we reply 'Indeed the statesman orders the wicked ones not to be healed, but the doctor who cares for bodies heals him, looking to the good of the body. Besides he pays the penalty just in being sick and he should also be thought deserving of assistance.' Hence in every case we should turn towards the good. And if we commit injustice, we ought to strive to proceed to the better. For that's how a fallen athlete, by employing olive oil and exercise, once again becomes a victor. So we too ought to pay the penalty when we commit injustice, so that on being healed we may recognize what is true and avoid the extremes of passion.

23.6. **'Now which is the finest of these?'** (478b3): having said that it is better for one who commits injustice to pay the penalty than not to, now [Socrates] argues from the inability to endure pain: 'Just as children or those of infantile intelligence do not, through their inability to endure pain, put up with taking medicine or undergoing surgery and [as a result] end up in great misfortune, whereas those of greater courage do put up with them and are healed, so in this case too those who pay the penalty are healed, whereas those who do not are in a [condition] contrary to nature'.

It is worth asking the following: suppose there is someone who from beginning to end lives a well constituted life, and someone else who to begin with in his youth conducts himself in an unseemly way, but later is converted and practises a divinely constituted life—are the two of them equally happy or not?<sup>457</sup> We say that their well-being is the same, save that the one who lived well from the beginning has it to a greater degree, whereas the other does not have it in the same way. Hence we should strive not to commit injustice, and if we do commit injustice, then we ought to strive to pay the penalty. For if those who undergo surgery and cautery and take their medicine get rid of bodily suffering, so all the more do those who are purified in their souls [get rid passions]. Someone, however, who has never committed injustice at all is of fair fate and happy, whereas someone who has indeed committed injustice but who has paid the penalty is called neither happy nor of fair fate, but less wretched. The administration of justice

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<sup>457</sup> Again Ol. seems very concerned with the question of the sinner who repents (cf. 23.3 and note).

therefore corresponds to the medical craft, for just as the latter heals bodies, so it heals souls.

23.7. **'Administration of justice makes people temperate and more just, and is in fact the medical craft to heal baseness'** (478d6): note how he calls the administration of justice the medical craft of the soul.

23.8. **'And presumably second to him'** (478e1): 'second' here must not be understood in conjunction with the word 'happier' above, since someone who pays the penalty would then be happy but less so. So do not [understand it] in comparison to the above, but understand 'second' *in rank*, i.e. 'not of that kind, but wretched, only less wretched than one who does not pay the penalty'.

23.9. **'And excellence of body'** (479b3-4): note that he calls health the excellence of body, not of soul.

23.10. **'Do you observe the things that follow'** (479c4): note that Aristotle benefited [from this teaching], saying 'A syllogism is an argument in which, certain things having been posited, something else of necessity follows'.<sup>458</sup> Note how [Socrates] says 'Do you notice the things that follow from the argument?', that is 'Have you followed [the argument] to its conclusion?'.

23.11. **'If you think we should'** (479c7):<sup>459</sup> Polus says this: 'If you think the argument should be concluded in a different way, speak on'. Then Socrates sums up their discussion, in order that their decisions should remain in their minds. Observe that the many are not summoned as witnesses, but that the compelling power of the demonstration discovered the truth.

23.12. **'And hasn't it been proved?'** (479e8): 'The truth has been made clear to the best of our ability, and what we undertook at the start, Polus, has been proved. And it is clear that Archelaus or anyone else who commits injustice and does not pay the penalty will be wretched'. Even if you suggest that Archelaus is immortal, then still more will he remain wretched, since he is harmed eternally, as it is said in the *Laws*.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> An Aristotelian definition of syllogism, *An.Pr.* 1.1 and *Top.* 1.1.

<sup>459</sup> Ol. reads ἄλλως with the principal family of manuscripts, giving the lemma a meaning like 'if you have another view' or 'if you think it right to argue it in another way'.

<sup>460</sup> 904a-5c: there is no specific mention here of Archelaus.

**Lecture 24<sup>461</sup> (480a1-481b5)**

24.1. 'All right' (480a1): the topic that had originally been under investigation is the *creative cause* of constitutional well-being. Socrates said that it was not rhetoric, while Gorgias affirmed that it was. Then Socrates asked 'Does the orator understand justice or not?', and it was demonstrated that he does not. So Gorgias granted that he does not, although he ought to. Next Polus said that Gorgias was wrong to agree that the orator must be entirely knowledgeable about justice. Thereafter the *formal cause* was investigated, and it was shown that justice is the formal cause. Socrates has demonstrated everything, that suffering injustice is preferable to committing injustice, and also that a man who avoids paying the penalty is much more wretched than one who pays it.

So now Socrates wants to show that [rhetoric] is harmful and incongruous and useless. It is harmful, because it pleads the case of wrongdoers and defends them for profit, whereas it hates the just and speaks against them. It is incongruous, because, if he had reasoning at his helm, the orator should stand in judgment of his friends, himself and his parents, if they commit injustice, and prosecute them so they can be healed. As for his enemies, however—if he has enemies, as he should not have—he should refrain from judging and prosecuting them, defending them so that they stay in the same state and are not healed.

24.2. So you learn from this argument too that we should not regard those who commit injustice and profit by it as clever in what they do. But of course there are those who say 'The fellow is doing well out of injustice, and in spite of all his evil crimes he has never stumbled or tripped'. Don't you say that, but if you hate them, pray that they keep on reaping profits and not paying the penalty. Then they will not be healed. Accordingly the philosopher Ammonius says that somebody sadly tried to tell his teacher Proclus 'That fellow, though stupid, gets on well while I get misfortune'. And the philosopher Proclus answered him 'If he's your enemy, sing his praises as long as you see him paying no penalty!' Therefore rhetoric is stripped of all benefit, if the orator

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<sup>461</sup> Lecture 24 concentrates on drawing the moral lessons from the arguments with Polus. Ol. employs allegorical interpretation to alleviate some of the harsher consequences of Platonic doctrine (24.5, 9).



says nothing in the cause of just persons and fails to submit himself, if guilty, to the punishment. And the orator is useless if he does not do anything right.

24.3. It is worth investigating why [Socrates] says here that we should accuse our parents and brothers when they commit injustice, so that they pay the penalty. Yet in the *Laws*<sup>462</sup> he instructs children to be obedient, even when they suffer injustice. For he says that nature does not recognize a good or a bad father, just a father, so that we should respect our father even when he does wrong. And again he says 'If your brother does you an injustice, don't let the injustice be your concern, but the fact that he is your brother'. We say that by 'accusation' he here means the spoken act. For just as we accuse ourselves in speech, when we say 'Where have I gone wrong? What have I done?' and so forth, so too you should proceed in this way and accuse your father or your brother, not in court but with speech, saying to your father in a reasonable tone: 'Father, let's not do this, it's not right, and let nothing we'll regret come between us'. Try to persuade him. If you cannot, let it pass.<sup>463</sup>

We must understand that some men go wrong, while others do not. And some of those who go wrong cease [their wrongdoing], while others do not. And some of those who cease [their wrongdoing] put the blame on themselves and criticize themselves, while others lay the blame elsewhere. Those who do not go wrong at all are godlike.<sup>464</sup> Those who go wrong and do not cease [their wrongdoing] are diametrically opposed to them and are the most wretched. All of those who cease [their wrongdoing] and on ceasing put the blame on themselves go wrong to a lesser degree. Those who lay the blame elsewhere go wrong to a greater degree, postulating divine causes for their wrongdoing, as Homer (*Il.* 19.87) says:

'But Zeus, and Fate, and the holy-wandering Erinyes.'

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<sup>462</sup> 717b-d. Ol. does not refer here to the *Crito* 50e though he might have done; the work is mentioned at 26.23.

<sup>463</sup> It is perhaps noteworthy that Ol. does not contrast Euthyphro's attitude here (*Euthphr.* 4b-e), though the work is never openly cited in *Grg.*-commentary.

<sup>464</sup> Following the MS θεῖοι, in preference to W.'s θεοί, which, though in agreement with the marginal note, cannot easily be reconciled with τῶν ἀνθρώπων at p. 131.1.

So we should put the blame on ourselves, and turn back towards the better path. Indeed that is what Homer (*Il.* 9.119-20) said:

‘But when I am deceived and obey doleful counsels,  
Gladly I make amends.’

So rhetoric has been shown to be unprofitable on all counts.

24.4. **‘Wherever he will pay justice as quickly as possible’** (480a7-8): observe the veiled reference to speech. For it is above all speech which chastises a man and deters him more quickly. For there are times when the juryman lets him be and does not turn him around.

24.5. **‘And incurable’** (480b2): Why ‘incurable’? What? Is he punished eternally, and is never freed [of the evil]? No, punishment is not eternal, presuming that God wants to turn us towards the good, whereas whatever pays the penalty eternally is eternally in a state contrary to nature. [This is] especially [so] if we are being turned around so that we may lead a sensible life in future;<sup>465</sup> so punishment will be pointless if we are punished eternally. We shall learn in the myth how eternal punishment beneath the earth is spoken of: that there are cycles which he calls ‘aeons’, and that one must submit [to punishment] for the duration of these so as to be healed.<sup>466</sup>

24.6. **‘If our previous agreements’** (480b3-5): i.e. ‘If the premises have been agreed to be true, the conclusions which follow are true in every case’.

24.7. **‘Close their eyes’** (480c6-7): just as those who cannot stand their pain, but subject themselves to doctors for healing, close their eyes, so they cannot see how they are being cut, so too it is necessary for those who are going to be rid of their passions to close their eyes and endure it.

24.8. **‘It’s absurd’** (480e1): he is ashamed to grant his complete agreement, and says ‘Your words are odd, but this follows from what was granted previously’. So observe the sinews of the proof.

24.9. **‘As long as we don’t ourselves suffer’** (480e6): he says ‘If you have an enemy, but it’s not you he does injustice to, but someone else, then don’t be anxious that he pay the penalty, but actually

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<sup>465</sup> Stronger punctuation than W.’s comma is needed here.

<sup>466</sup> For Ol.’s famous adjustment of the eternal punishment of the final myth to the milder prescriptions of other Platonic myths see 50.2-3. Related to the Greek word αἰών are also the Greek for ‘ever’ and ‘eternal’ (αἰώνιος).

assist him, if you can, so that his punishment is even greater'. What? Must the victim of injustice go on suffering injustice?<sup>467</sup> No! In the first place because it is the criminal rather than someone who suffers injustice who is wretched, as has been demonstrated. In the second place because one should secretly say to the victim 'Don't obey him'. Note that he is hinting at something more profound. For he says 'If someone does you an injustice', i.e. 'If affections are causing pain in your soul, accuse them and surgically remove them'. And 'If the man who commits injustice is doing other people an injustice (i.e. 'If someone is depriving you of external goods, money and the like'), bear it lightly'.

24.10. **'We must see he does not suffer death'** (481a6): if he remains deathless, his enslavement to vice increases.

24.11. **'It's use doesn't seem to me to be all that great'** (481b3): he said 'Not great', because he knows that even rhetoric acts for justice on rare occasions, perhaps not as its principal purpose, but by accident or for profit or for some other reason.

## Lecture 25 (481b6-482c3)<sup>468</sup>

25.1. **'Tell me, Chaerephon'** (481b6): in the discussion with Gorgias, where we were instructed about the creative cause of constitutional well-being, the argument sought the formal cause. Subsequently, in the discussion with Polus justice was established as that cause. Similarly, here [Socrates] begins by taking up the formal [cause], but what he reveals is the final [cause], because Callicles suggested pleasure—the disgraceful kind—whereas he himself [suggested] intellectual pleasure, the sort that draws us away towards the divine.<sup>469</sup>

<sup>467</sup> Following Maas' addition of the article *o*.

<sup>468</sup> In lecture 25 Ol. discusses the entry of Callicles into the argument, his moral and intellectual failings, and his loves; Socrates' loves are contrasted.

<sup>469</sup> See 0.5 for the division of the dialogue into three parts corresponding to the three characters. However, in 0.5 the final cause is given as the good whereas here it is given, somewhat surprisingly, as intellectual pleasure. Ol. has already discussed this distinction between kinds of pleasure at 3.13 and, again, at 9.7. Though the section of the Platonic text that he is commenting on here has no reference to intellectual pleasure, Ol. perhaps associates the contrast Socrates draws between philosophy as one of his loves and the *demos* as one of Callicles' with the distinction between two kinds of pleasure. On 'intellectual pleasure' Ol. may be influenced by Plato's attempts in *Republic* 9 to show how the monarchical man's life turns out to be 729 times more pleasant than the tyrannical man's (587de).

It was reasonable, then, that [Plato] employed this arrangement of characters because one character could not represent all these positions, opposed as they are.<sup>470</sup> So, when Gorgias said 'The orator will have understanding of justice', and is refuted, and is unable to say the opposite, i.e. 'Of course he will not have understanding', Polus says exactly that. And again, when Polus proposed the view that 'the just is fine', because in some respects he gets near to the common notions, Callicles, who is far [from them], says 'That is false, for it is not justice but injustice that is fine'. So since [Callicles] is governed by this sickness, there is need in this case for more arguments to shift him.<sup>471</sup>

So Callicles, who constantly leads a childish and shameful life,<sup>472</sup> asks Chaerephon, who is an intermediate, 'Is Socrates joking or is he in earnest when he says these things?' And Chaerephon answers philosophically and says 'He seems to me to be unnaturally serious'—for the arguments are beyond nature<sup>473</sup>—'but Socrates is here, so ask him if he is in earnest'.

25.2. Callicles says 'By the gods, I desire to learn'. Observe again how he said 'desire', living as he does in accordance with love of pleasure. Callicles says 'If he is seriously urging these things, our life is turned upside down, if we are no longer unjust and out for gain'. Hence he thinks injustice is a fine thing, and does not realize it is the unjust man's life that is upside down, not the life of temperance.

So since Callicles asked 'Are you joking, Socrates, or are you serious?', Socrates reveals that he is serious. And in order to

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<sup>470</sup> Ol.'s comment here is very compressed. Perhaps the thought is that though Socrates' examination of each of the three characters progressively takes us from the productive to the final cause of political well-being, this is not because each of the interlocutors' views are *about* these three causes successively. The views of Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles, as what follows makes clear, are about something else, and *qua* views they are at loggerheads with each other. Nevertheless, Ol. suggests, Plato achieves *systematic* progress in his investigation of the causes of political well-being through Socrates' examination of these views, even though on the face of it each successive view involves a denial of the previous one.

<sup>471</sup> Ol. interprets the recalcitrance of Callicles (and consequently the effort needed to tackle him) in terms of his distance from the common notions, cf. 21.1-2 with notes.

<sup>472</sup> Ol. turns Callicles' jibes against Socrates (485c1, 489b5 ff.) back on him.

<sup>473</sup> A wordplay on *ὑπερφύως* and *ὑπὲρ φύσιν*: the former is in Plato's text, (Irwin's 'remarkably') but the latter is Ol.'s. A theoretical background emerges at 26.3: it is *logos* which lifts humankind above nature.

establish this he says 'If we men did not share in common affections, we would not recognize each other's [affections]'. For example, if someone had not had fever, when he saw fever in someone else he would not know that that man was sick, but, if he knows from experience, he understands. This is clearer still concerning language: for if we did not know each other's languages, we would not recognize [what we each said]. For if each had his own language, we would understand nothing. Hence a man who uses the Greek language, and only knew that, would not understand the Egyptian language. Hence Socrates says to Callicles: 'if we did not have common affections we would not know each other's'.<sup>474</sup>

25.3. What is the affection common to Socrates and Callicles? Note that Socrates and Callicles each had a love. They each loved both a person and a thing. In Socrates' case the thing is philosophy, for he had it as his beloved, and the person is Alcibiades and such like. In the same way Callicles had a love for the *demos* of Athens, for he flattered it, and for a young man whose proper name was Demos, and this Demos was son of Pylilampes.

'Callicles, you do whatever your beloveds want. For instance, if you were saying something to the *demos* of Athens or to Demos son of Pylilampes, and you knew it did not please them, even though you are a clever chap and stop at nothing, nevertheless you would go after them and say what pleased them. I, on the other hand, place myself at the disposal of one of my beloveds and do whatever it asks and never shrink. And what is it? Philosophy. As for the other, which is Alcibiades, there are times when I draw

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<sup>474</sup> The fever and illness illustration recalls *Phd.* 105c, distantly however, for *Phd.* simply says that one learns the connection between fever and illness through experience (πειρα). And it is odd to suggest, as Ol. does, that the point is clearer in the case of a shared language. It is true, of course, that if one only knew Greek one would not understand what someone said in Egyptian. But is knowing a language a *pathos*, an affection like fever? Perhaps what Ol. has in mind is that if one does not share a language with someone else, then the *sounds* of the other's speech, though heard and so a *pathos*, are not understood as articulate speech. Hence, *familiarity* with the sounds of a language is a symptom, as it were, of understanding it, the way fever might be of illness (cf. *Tht.* 163b). The reference to the idea that if each had his 'own' language, we would not understand anything is not an anticipation of Wittgenstein's private language argument: Ol. has in mind the simpler point that if the sounds of each person's speech were unfamiliar to everybody else, there would be no understanding between any or all of them. Ol.'s example may be drawn from experience of the market-place in 6th century Alexandria.

away and do not want to return to him. So you do whatever pleases them all, whereas I do only what pleases philosophy. So it was not me who said what I said, but her, which is the same as saying that it is truth speaking. And truth is always serious and never jokes. Refute her, if you can.'

Note that Socrates, as he says in the *Alcibiades* and more perfectly in the *Phaedrus*, was a lover inspired by God.<sup>475</sup> And [a lover] inspired by God differs from a vulgar [lover] in that the divinely inspired lover aims at the soul and does everything to turn the beloved towards the good, whereas the vulgar one, if truth be told, hates and does not love. For he wants the lover to neglect the soul, and concern himself with bodily beauty. For he loves the body. So he even wants him to be poor, so that in his need he will do anything at all, and he wants him to be without a city and without mother and father, so that he may seize his opportunity when he desires to be with him.<sup>476</sup>

25.4. **'Are we to suppose'** (481c1): some manuscripts have 'suppose', and some do not.<sup>477</sup> However, if [the manuscript] does not have it there is no necessity to supply it as understood, for the statement can stand without it. If it has it, however, what is said is clearer.

25.5. **'If human beings did not share common experiences, some sharing one, others sharing another'** (481c6): understand 'common to some in one respect, to others in another'.<sup>478</sup>

25.6. **[Philosophy always says] 'What you hear from me now'** (482a5): observe the 'always' and also 'in all my life'.<sup>479</sup> Hence

<sup>475</sup> *Phdr.* 238c-241d. Whereas this is the canonical Platonic source, Ol. refers also to *Alc.* 103a, a dialogue already familiar to his students: see Procl. *In Alc.* 34-36, Ol. *In Alc.* 13-14.

<sup>476</sup> Ol. is referring to Socrates' first speech in *Phdr.* (240a), and not Lysias' speech, in praise of the non-lover. Ol. treats this person as the vulgar lover. The reason may be that Socrates' speech, unlike Lysias', contains a theory of love and its powers (cf. 237b-238e) that he considers underpins the pragmatic cost-benefit analysis of *eros* found in Lysias' speech. Perhaps Ol. thinks that this conception of *eros* also fits Callicles' concern with bodily pleasure.

<sup>477</sup> Our manuscripts have φῶμεν (B T P F), while Burnet reads θῶμεν (Madvig). Ol. knows texts that omit the verb altogether.

<sup>478</sup> Since Irwin appears here to misconstrue the Platonic text (on which see Dodds 1959, ad loc.), and is certainly out of tune with Ol.'s comment, the translation used for this lemma is that of Zeyl (1987). Probably Ol.'s text does not have ἦ before τὸ αὐτό. He correctly understands πάθος at c5 with τὸ αὐτό (c6), and recognizes τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοι τι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοι τι as a qualification of τὸ αὐτό.

<sup>479</sup> 'Always' is missing from B and F, but is in other respected MSS.

knowledge is an unchangeable thing.<sup>480</sup> Of course, when Callicles said later 'You always say the same things Socrates', Socrates replies 'And not only shall I say the same things, but also about the same things'.

25.7. **'Much less impulsive'** (482a6): both 'to be rejected' and 'impulsive' are recorded.<sup>481</sup> However, he is saying in a single statement 'the one lover'—i.e. Alcibiades or someone like him—'is often impulsive in my presence and to be rejected, while the other lover—i.e. philosophy—'is always honoured by me, and I say what it requires'.

25.8. **'For this son of Cleinias'** (482a6-7): meaning that 'Alcibiades enjoys different discourse at different times, while philosophy always longs for the same discourse, just because it is true'.

25.9. **'And you were present yourself'** (482b1-2): 'And you yourself were present when the arguments against Polus were set in motion. So if you can refute them, do so'

25.10. **'The God of the Egyptians'** (482b5): we have already said (10.7) that 'the dog' signifies the discerning faculty of the rational soul. He said Egyptian because the Egyptians were leaders in the use of symbols.<sup>482</sup>

25.11. **'Callicles himself would not agree with you, Callicles'** (482b5-6): he says 'If you leave the argument unexamined, Callicles, and do not allow the claims to be investigated, Callicles will never be in tune with you', meaning 'You will never be in tune with yourself, but your whole life will be in blind discord. It is better to have the strings of the lyre out of tune and not making harmony, or for a chorus to be out of tune, than to have a soul at war with itself and in discord'. For this is its greatest evil.<sup>483</sup>

25.12. **'To be discordant with myself'** (482c2): 'it is absurd for me to be out of tune with myself and to contradict myself'.

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<sup>480</sup> Ol. employs the Stoic concept that ἐπιστήμη is ἀμετάπτωτος or ἀμετάθετος, SVF 1.68 etc.

<sup>481</sup> ἔκβλητος and ἐμπληκτος. Respected manuscripts have the latter, Ol. the former. Hence Irwin's lemma does not match Ol.'s choice of reading.

<sup>482</sup> On Ol.'s treatment of Egyptian matters see Tarrant (1997b) 183; the dog is not the only signifier of the rational soul in this commentary (Hera 4.3, the sieve 30.1-2, Prometheus' fire 48.6).

<sup>483</sup> Cf. the concept of discord as the basis of the soul's evil at *Phd.* 93c-e.

**Lecture 26 (482c4-486d1)** <sup>484</sup>

26.1. **'Socrates, I think you swagger'** (482c4): Callicles finds two faults with Socrates, his intention and his cognitive method. As to his intention, [the fault is] that he conducts his arguments maliciously and by design asks questions that his interlocutor is unable to answer with his own opinions because of shame in front of the audience. 'This is what you did to Gorgias, Socrates, when you asked him whether the orator should be knowledgeable about justice. The idea was to make him embarrassed [in front of] the audience so he would say "Yes, he should be", for most people think it absurd for the orator not to know about justice. However, Polus rightly said that Gorgias was wrong to agree with you. Then again', he continued, 'you said to Polus, "do you think justice is a fine thing?"', and he granted this out of embarrassment again, and said injustice was base'.<sup>485</sup>

26.2. That is his attack on Socrates' intention, and this is the attack on his cognitive method. Note that a deduction is from at least two premises. The premises must not differ with respect to all [their terms], for then nothing comes of them. For no-one says 'The soul is immortal, the universe is eternal, therefore the soul is eternal', since here the premises differ with respect to all [their terms]. So they need to have something in common, as when we say 'The soul is self-moved, what is self-moved is eternal, the soul is therefore eternal'.

Furthermore note that the middle term must not be ambiguous, or else that generates a fallacious inference: e.g. if I say 'The swan is white, white is a colour, therefore the swan is a colour'. What? Is [a swan] not a substance but a colour? We say that the premises are true, but that the conclusion is not drawn truly. For the minor premise refers to what participates (for the swan participates in

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<sup>484</sup> Lecture 26 examines Callicles' attack on Socrates, drawing a distinction between the complaints concerning his intentions and the complaints concerning his overlooking ambiguities in terms whose natural sense differs from their conventional sense. Ambiguity itself receives a fairly full treatment. Callicles' praise of nature at the expense of convention, and the requirements for Socrates' reply are likewise discussed.

<sup>485</sup> The criticism that Socrates argues maliciously and manipulates the shamefulness of his interlocutor is a familiar one today, and it is difficult to believe that Ol. did not regularly encounter it among his own students.



white), whereas the major premise refers to what is participated (for the expression 'the white colour' denotes what is participated, that is, 'whiteness'). Many other similar examples are also possible: e.g. if I say 'This man is Ajax, Ajax fought Hector in single combat, therefore this man fought Hector in single combat'. And again if I say 'This is a statue, the statue is a human, therefore this is a human'.<sup>486</sup> Observe, then, that ambiguity misleads.<sup>487</sup>

Therefore Callicles says 'Socrates, you do not possess understanding but reason fallaciously. For it is true that injustice is base and that baseness is evil, but your conclusion, that injustice is evil, is false. For you must understand,' Callicles says, 'that injustice is base according to convention, but not according to nature, whereas baseness is evil according to nature. So you reason fallaciously taking one [sense of 'base'] from convention, and another from nature'.<sup>488</sup> So he says 'Injustice is base according to those who

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<sup>486</sup> Ol. offers an excursus on the rules of syllogistic. In his example of fallacious inference, Ol.'s point seems to be that 'white' in the two expressions 'the white swan' and 'the white colour' is ambiguous, because the first designates the *thing* that is white (i.e. what participates in white), while the second designates the *property* of being white (i.e. the colour white that is participated). It is difficult to fit Ol.'s other two examples into this pattern of analysis. Perhaps Ol. does not mean the ambiguity in these cases to be understood as strictly parallel to the first case. Nevertheless, he can maintain that in all three cases one and the same expression is used to designate different kinds of entity in the two premises, thereby contravening the syllogistic rule that the two premises contain a common term. Thus, 'Ajax' is ambiguous between minor and major premise because in the first it designates the proper name by which an indicated man is called ('this is Ajax' understood as 'this (man) is (an) Ajax', hence, this man is the participant in *being called Ajax*), while in the major premise 'Ajax' designates a *unique* entity, viz. the character in Homer who fought Hector, and whose name, therefore, may be treated as what others are called *after*—the prototype Ajax so to speak. The ambiguity turns on not distinguishing between 'being named Ajax' and 'being the (prototype) Ajax'. Similarly with the third example: the expression 'statue' in the minor premise designates what *kind* something is, employing a generic use of 'statue' which could include representations of gods or animals, while in the major it designates the *usual shape* of that something, i.e. a human-shaped statue.

<sup>487</sup> Ol. turns the objections of Callicles, even though he is considered a despicable character, into a genuine lesson for his pupils. Aulus Gellius (NA 10.22.2, 24) had done likewise in the second century A.D., perhaps under the influence of Taurus, and it is conceivable that there had been a long exegetic tradition of finding lessons in what *any* character in Plato had to say. See further, Tarrant 1996.

<sup>488</sup> One may find it odd that Ol. construes Callicles' objection that Socrates does not distinguish what is base by nature from what is base by convention as a case of ambiguity over the term αἰσχρόν. The case only fits his earlier examples and analysis, if he takes Callicles as saying that there are two *senses*

established the conventions, to prevent the stronger from overpowering the weaker. For this reason the weaker cast spells and incantations upon the stronger and tell them they must not commit injustice, to keep them from committing injustice.

26.3. Yet nature knows this [injustice] is fine. So too among irrational animals we see that the stronger are better off than the weaker—the stronger eat up those weaker than them and thus stay alive'.

Callicles introduces these irrational creatures as an example, since he bases his life on irrationality and does not realize that those who follow his way are worse than animals. For animals eat only until repletion, but brutish people and those who according to him are real men are never satisfied with their unjust acts. Furthermore he does not realize that animals strive merely to exist and that is why they attack the weaker—to stay alive; whereas men have something above nature and ought to imitate superior creatures, not inferior ones, and to live in accordance with intelligence.

So it is up to Socrates to show that good law [*nomos*] coincides with nature.<sup>489</sup> Note that both come from God, and intelligence and nature are founded upon each other and the greater of the two is intelligence. Intelligence is *nomos*; because that's why it is named *nomos*, short for 'what dispenses to each his due'.<sup>490</sup> And so we must not mock well-established laws, for we must not use violence against the weaker.

'What then? Should not the stronger have a greater share than the weaker?' We say yes, but more not in quantity but in quality, as in the true saying of Hesiod (*Op.* 40), 'Fools, they do not know by how much the half is more than the whole'. For the minority,

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of αἰσχροπὸν, i.e. two different kind of entities that are designated by the expression. In the Platonic text Callicles accuses Socrates of rhetorical tricks but not, at least not obviously, of exploiting an ambiguous term in a deduction.

<sup>489</sup> This remark reinforces the impression that Ol. takes Callicles to be accusing Socrates of exploiting an ambiguity in αἰσχροπὸν (cf. above). For the remark is equivalent to the assertion that Socrates must show that there is no ambiguity in αἰσχροπὸν of the sort suggested by Callicles, since nature and convention coincide—i.e. αἰσχροπὸν does not designate two different kinds of entity.

<sup>490</sup> Ol. has in mind *Laws* 714 a 1-2, where we are told that the orderings or dispensations of intelligence (νοῦ διανομή) are given the name of 'law' (νόμος). The single word *Nomos* covers meanings such as 'law', 'convention' and 'rule', and the passage depends on this range.

when just, is less in quantity than the worthless and the unjust [majority], but in quality it is much more.

26.4. So the stronger should have the greater share of precisely this, the power to commit injustice, without actually committing it. For this is a sufficient good for him so far as having more power than another is concerned. For someone who commits injustice lacks the power to be master. How could he [be master], being a slave to ten thousand masters, his passions? And besides, see how great a thing justice is, in that the unjust themselves lack the power to commit injustice without justice. For unless the unjust preserve justice in their relations with each other, they would never have the power to wrong others, for they will be in conflict and will achieve nothing.<sup>491</sup>

So Callicles says to Socrates 'You said that I do what the common people want, not realising that you are a demagogue, for you do what pleases the common people when you ask questions that please the many and the impotent majority. So I approve of Polus for challenging you when you said the orator should be knowledgeable about justice. I do not approve, however, that he too was embarrassed, and agreed that justice is fine and did not say what he himself thought'.

26.5. **'He himself in turn was bound up'** (482e1): this is a metaphor from irrational animals being tied up for slaughter.<sup>492</sup>

26.6. **'You pursued'** (483a7): i.e. 'you pursued'.<sup>493</sup>

26.7. **'Which is also worse, suffering injustice'** (483a8): 'Suffering injustice is baser and worse by nature, Socrates, and committing injustice is fine'. Now note that this is Callicles' view. But [in fact] if someone suffers injustice concerning externals or the body, it is not evil, for we were not born wedded to these, and so losing the things that are not in our power ought not to burden us. But if the *soul* suffers injustice, this is the worst evil, and then we must strive to be rid of this injustice. So let us be concerned with the salvation of the soul, recognizing that possessions and the body contribute nothing [to that]. Let us therefore do what that [poet] says,<sup>494</sup> 'I

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<sup>491</sup> Both themes, of the need of the unjust to have a modicum of justice among themselves, and of the powerlessness of the completely unjust, are explored in *Rep.* I 352 b–d.

<sup>492</sup> If correct, then relevant, as it adds to the tone of physical violence which Callicles' words convey.

<sup>493</sup> Ol. explains that the *lemma* employs an archaic form of the verb.

<sup>494</sup> The poet is Archilochus, fr. 16, 3–4 Diehl = 5, 3–4 West, a popular

saved my life. What care I for that shield? Away with it!' So Callicles says these things to no avail. Observe the *power* of Socrates:<sup>495</sup> for he brings all the defences of injustice into the open and refutes every one, so that no point that might disturb us should remain unrefuted, but that everything should be decisively resolved.<sup>496</sup>

26.8. **'When they're inferior'** (483c6): not 'worse', but 'weaker'.

26.9. **'Xerxes when he marched against Greece'** (483d6-7): Callicles believes that Xerxes acted justly. But that he was in fact unjust, and on a large scale, is made clear by his having made due reparations for his unholy deeds.<sup>497</sup>

26.10. **'By spells'** (483e6): this fellow understands casting spells at a material level, but it is also possible to cast spells at a divine level. For, it is in this sense that we should cast spells with arguments and cool the passions.<sup>498</sup>

26.11. **'He will shake off and smash'** (484a3): Callicles does not care for the truth, but keeps on using vivid language in a most rhetorical fashion.

26.12. **'Shows himself master'** (484a6): how is one who is slave to his passions a master? Such a person is the worst of slaves rather than a master.

26.13. **'And I think Pindar too'** (484b1-2): Callicles seeks to establish that the stronger have power over the weaker, by reference to the poets. He does not speak with understanding, for we must understand with what intent the poets speak, since even the myths themselves contain some other concealed meaning. Taken this way Pindar too identifies as law what is truly law. For Heracles

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passage in later Neoplatonism (e.g. Elias *In Isag.* 22.19-23, where the shield again is the body and the self that is saved the soul!).

<sup>495</sup> Ol. does not miss the opportunity to highlight Socrates' power in contrast with the rhetorician's claims to power.

<sup>496</sup> Ol. employs the three categories of goods: cf. 17.2, 23.1, 36.3-5, 38.2, 40.4, 43.1. On bringing things out into the open, cf. Rutherford (1995), 149-50.

<sup>497</sup> There is nothing in the Platonic text about reparations, and one assumes that it is a metaphorical reference to the price Xerxes had to pay for the invasion; indeed 'unholy' suggests strongly that Ol. is thinking of some divine punishment for the burning of the Akropolis, analogous to that paid by the Greeks for sacrileges at Troy. That suffering is a *proof* of injustice in Ol.'s universe is clear from the doctrine of providence at 17.2 and 19.2.

<sup>498</sup> Theurgy and spell-making, a major concern of Iamblichan and post-Iamblichan Neoplatonism, is an infrequent topic in Ol., and here receives an essentially metaphorical rendering. Ol. is recalling a passage in *Phd.*, where the interlocutors are encouraged to find someone to charm their souls (77e-78a); cf. 5.3, 20.3, 39.8.

was not being unjust, but was successfully overcoming his passions. For he did not do violence to Geryon and steal his oxen by force without payment, but removed them from those who had them unjustly.<sup>499</sup>

And he introduces from Euripides' play *Antiope* various iambic lines, exhorting Socrates not to philosophize but rather to lead the life of the polis. And he says to him 'I applaud young men turning their hand to philosophic education, but it is foolish for us not to disregard it when old men'. But understand that we should always pursue philosophy, when [we are] young for the sake of soothing the passions, and especially when [we are] old, for then the passions begin to subside, and reason flourishes. We should always have philosophy as our patron, since it is she who performs the task of Homer's Athena, scattering mist.<sup>500</sup> Note that since his citations are in verse he [Callicles] changes them to suit his prose delivery and proceeds with his speech in this way.<sup>501</sup>

26.14. **'For even if someone has an altogether good nature'** (484c8): [Callicles] says all these things without a direct attack on Socrates, but applies them generally, so as not, he says, to cause him hurt.

26.15. **'And in human pleasures'** (484d5): he speaks both truly and falsely. He speaks truly of the pleasures that he follows, for of such pleasures philosophy is in truth without experience, but of divine pleasures, the ones that lead to virtue, it has the most experience of all.<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Ol. anticipates his doctrine of allegorical meanings in myth, cf. 46.2ff. As is traditional, following Prodicus (Xen. *Mem.* 2.1) Heracles is the archetype of the man who works hard to overcome the passions, a model for Antisthenes and the Cynics: see particularly Lucian *Symp.* 11-12, 16, *Vit. Auct.* 8 (SSR VB80), D.L. 6.2 (SSR VA97). This would of course make him diametrically opposed to Callicles in Ol.'s eyes. NB the phrase 'without payment' occurs in the Platonic text (484b9), where Callicles understands it as intended by Pindar's poem.

<sup>500</sup> The traditional image of Athena representing wisdom or philosophy. The source is perhaps especially *Il.* 5.127, with Proclus' allegorical interpretation (*In Remp.* 1.18.25-6) which was popular with the Alexandrian commentators. See Whitman (1987) 19ff.

<sup>501</sup> For a similar remark about Platonic methodology, see *In Alc.* 104.

<sup>502</sup> Again the contrast between ordinary and divine pleasure, cf. 3.13, 9.7, 25.1. Of crucial influence is *Rep.* 9 581c-582d, though a superficial reading of that passage might suggest that philosophy does have limited experience of Calliclean pleasures: however it is of the necessary physical pleasures that the philosopher will necessarily have had experience, and these are clearly distinguished from unnecessary ones, 8 558d ff., cf. 581e3.

26.16. **'They prove themselves ridiculous'** (484e1): for indeed they will be laughed at by the foolish. So too Thales while walking about and with his mind on the heavens and astronomy fell into a well. And a Thracian woman said to him 'This man does not know the things on earth and seeks to know the things of heaven'. We must not attend to such people, even if they box our ears, but direct ourselves up towards the divine.<sup>503</sup>

26.17. **'Suitable for a free citizen'** (485b4): free, since it produces what is natural for him, and what is natural is fine, and what is fine is free.

26.18. **'He shuns the city centre'** (485d5): the philosopher both flees and does not flee. Now the theoretical [philosopher's] gaze always flees towards the divine, whereas the [philosopher-]statesman's, if he has worthy citizens, remains and shapes them. If they are not worthy, then in truth he retreats and makes a fortress for himself and sits there in flight from the boisterousness of the city.<sup>504</sup> This is what Plato and Socrates did. In this way Socrates became so great that the Pythian Apollo testified to it.<sup>505</sup>

26.19. **'Win good reputations'** (485d6): note that the poet<sup>506</sup> also recognizes a fine orator, for he applied to him [the phrase] 'with a charming sense of propriety'. Hence we should associate with the good and the fine ones. Note that judging what's beneficial ahead of what's fine is no great achievement, but making someone good and fine is a considerable one.<sup>507</sup>

26.20. **'As Amphion'** (485e4): this Amphion was a musician. 'So Zethus his brother said to him "throw aside your lyre and take up

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<sup>503</sup> The traditional anecdote of Thales the absent-minded philosopher, cf. *Thl.* 174a.

<sup>504</sup> Ol. returns to the heart-felt theme of the retreat of the philosopher to a fortress from a hostile world. See 32.4, 41.2. The idea is based upon *Rep.* 6 496c5-e2, and *Thl.* 173de, as well as the famous 'flight' passage at 176a-d. It is noteworthy that the statesman will in this regard be imitating the divine statesman of the *Politicus* myth, 272e. For something similar see Hermeias *In Phdr.* 146, 13-15.

<sup>505</sup> *Ap.* 21a 4-7; *Xen. Apol.* 14.

<sup>506</sup> Callicles appeals to Homer: *Il.* 9.441, so that Ol. feels obliged to argue that Homer is essentially on Plato's side, and so contrasts *Od.* 8.172, a passage of Homer clearly referring to an oratory approved both in style and content. It is now argued that Homer did not mean by αἰδώς what Ol. understands, but rather the respect *paid* to the orator by his hearers, Furley (1996) 87.

<sup>507</sup> These are assumed to be the tasks of the inferior and superior orators respectively.

arms.” So too I say to you, “Throw aside philosophy and render judgement here in the city”.

26.21. **‘You twist this fine nature of your soul into a childish shape’** (485e7): you can see how although Euripides said ‘womanly’, Callicles says ‘childish’.<sup>508</sup>

26.22. **‘And not [make a speech] to the councils of justice’** (486a1): Euripides said ‘You would not have anything to do with a hollow shield’; Callicles substitutes ‘Spend your time on law-suits’.

26.23. **‘I’ll be saying it out of good will to you’** (486a4): Callicles was truly speaking from good will, but Socrates urges him to consider whether in truth this good will is beneficial. For that is how he speaks to Crito too in the *Crito* (46b1-2).

26.24. **‘The culture of the world’s affairs’** (486c7): [Zethos] said to Amphion ‘practice the culture of war’; Callicles says ‘of the world’s affairs’.

26.25. **‘From which you will live in an empty house’** (486c7): ‘Cease these [pursuits], which will result in your dwelling in an empty, i.e. purposeless house, for you will gain no profit from them’. Note that we should disregard bodies and possessions, for the sake of the welfare and well-being of the soul. For instance Epictetus too says ‘If you love a child, believe that you love a human being, so that if he should die you will in no way be hurt or disturbed. And if a vase is broken, bear in mind that it was [just] a vase. Do not say “Oh, what a vase has been broken!” Do not be disturbed by anything, but bear it more lightly, hardened the more by these [words]’.<sup>509</sup>

26.26. **‘Living, reputation’** (486d1): here he calls wealth ‘living’.

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<sup>508</sup> Ol., an important source for this fragment, confirms the substance of Nauck’s reconstruction here (fr. 185.3), though he still does not reproduce the exact word, γυναικομίμω, supplied by Philostratus *VA* 4.21. Whether Ol. has a text of the play or simply follows a long line of commentators is unclear. The scholia are less informative.

<sup>509</sup> Ol. here cites the Stoic Epictetus (*Man.* 3) in support of his regular theme of freedom from disturbance (e.g. 2.13, 40.4, 47.2, cf. the muddled constitution, 32.4).

**Lecture 27 (486d2-488d3)**<sup>510</sup>

27.1. 'If I had a soul made of gold' (486d2): Employing this for his advantage as usual, Socrates says to Callicles 'I am not upset at your saying this, in fact I am delighted. For I want you to say everything you are able to say, so that you may either refute [me] or be refuted. So raise any difficulties you wish'. Observe that it is either those who are superior to us, divine beings for instance, or those who are in all respects totally ignorant, who do not have difficulties.

Much as one fire-stick rubbed against another kindles a flame, so too one difficulty rubbed against another becomes the cause of discovery.<sup>511</sup> Socrates therefore says 'If I had a golden soul, I would look for the stone by which [people] test and determine fine gold. But since it is not gold but rational, I am that much keener to find a man who could purify it, if it is adulterated'. Observe how naturally he has likened Callicles, who has a harsh and stubborn character, to a stone, and himself to pure gold, which produces no rust. For this is why Homer too said 'Upon a golden floor', on account of its being pure.<sup>512</sup>

Now we must set out all the arguments, so that the truth may be manifest. Socrates tells him 'Since you are a friend, do not deceive me. Refute me if you can. I know you feel goodwill toward me, since I know that the four of you have long been companions, and said to each other 'Up to what age should we do philosophy before abandoning it, thereafter to become statesmen?' So you've brought this up with me too, and clearly it is because you are my friend too that you have raised these points'.<sup>513</sup>

27.2. We must note that by these words Socrates furnishes a criterion for us that distinguishes an adviser.<sup>514</sup> He says that an

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<sup>510</sup> In lecture 27 Ol. deals with Socrates' tactics in responding to Callicles' harangue.

<sup>511</sup> Ol.'s image is a prosaic descendant of the 'leaping spark' in *Epistle 7*, 341cd.

<sup>512</sup> There is no reference to purification or adulteration in the Platonic text: Ol. is expounding and interpreting the famous analogy of *Il.* 4.2 in relation to the *Gorgias*.

<sup>513</sup> The four companions are Callicles, Teisander, Andron and Nausicydes. See Dodds 282, on 487c2.

<sup>514</sup> It is more likely that Ol. uses *kanon* in the general sense of 'criterion for judging', which it had in Plato and Aristotle, than in the technical sense



adviser needs to possess the following three things: *understanding*, *goodwill*, *frankness*. If he possessed understanding but not goodwill, he would not give the appropriate advice, being hostile. Thus, also, a doctor too who hates his patient will not heal him. Then again, if the adviser possessed understanding and goodwill, but not frankness, he would not give his advice. Surely that is why people do not give advice to kings, because they cannot summon the courage. So Socrates says 'Since you possess understanding, as you believe and the Athenians can testify'—note how he brings in the many as witnesses for him!<sup>515</sup>—'and you also possess goodwill, since you are a friend, and similarly you possess frankness too—even if not the proper kind but rather an irrational frankness, because it is shamelessness that you possess if you malign Gorgias and Polus for becoming ashamed—so, since you possess all three, be my adviser and refute me if I do not make good sense'.<sup>516</sup>

Now, since we make the biggest mistakes for the following three reasons, because we have a *misguided opinion* or through *temper* or through *appetite*, and since *misguided* character was refuted in the arguments with Gorgias, and hot-tempered character in those with Polus, so now the appetitive character must be refuted, so that we

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of the term in Hellenistic discussions of sense-impressions and concepts designated as criteria of truth (cf. Striker, 1974). There is no reference to an 'adviser' in Plato's text but to a 'tester'. Nevertheless, Callicles, whether ironically or not, did set out to advise Socrates about his pursuit of philosophy beyond youth. Hence, it is a fair interpretation of Socrates' counter-irony to take it as involving serious considerations about the 'grammar' of advice. Though Ol. does not comment on the irony, he picks up the conceptual points conveyed by Socratic irony.

<sup>515</sup> The testimony of the multitude has been rejected at 471e-472c.

<sup>516</sup> Ol. mentions two cases where someone who has the capacity to advise, since he possesses the relevant understanding, nevertheless refrains from or is reluctant to exercise it on a given occasion when it is called for. The two cases are associated with ill-will towards the advisee and fear of being frank with him respectively. Ol.'s interpretation of Socrates' remarks about a good 'tester' in terms of the criteria for an 'adviser' lead him to construe the latter solely in terms of his intellectual capacities and aspects of his will. But there could be other reasons, to do with the context or the situation, external to the adviser that rendered the *giving* of the advice inappropriate or, as we say, inadvisable. Such reasons may well include features of the advisee's state of mind or character. Nevertheless, it may well be that Ol. is not thinking of criteria of advice or advising but those for being an adviser. Even so, one might object, it is strange that *honesty* is not included among them. After all, one can frankly advise a king that he has been too honest with his subjects. Which leaves us with the interesting question whether honesty is essential to being a good *tester*, whether or not it is essential to being an adviser.

may put complete trust in the truth and come as near as possible to the common notions.<sup>517</sup>

27.3. Observe Socrates' great wisdom: he applies to his own case what Callicles should have been doing so that he can by these means convert him. He says 'Callicles, if you persuade me to adopt your views, I shall not only agree with you in words, but also translate my words into actions. For we should not stop at words, but seek actions too, seeing that we are actually adopting the theory with a view to good deeds. And so, Callicles, if I persuade you, always act upon what you agree to. Do not [assent] in words alone.'

So since Callicles supposed 'the stronger' and 'the better' and 'the more excellent' to be 'those more capable', he says, 'Tell me about these terms—are they different? Or do they all refer to the same thing, and, to put it simply, tell me whether you understand all these expressions in terms of power'—i.e. 'strength', because they are strong—'or in terms of knowledge'. And for a time Callicles takes them to signify power, and says 'I call all these people strong...'. A syllogism is being composed on these lines:

Justice is fine and good among the many  
The many are stronger than an individual  
The stronger are superior and better and more excellent  
Justice is therefore fine and good among the superior and the better.

Let this suffice for the present.<sup>518</sup>

27.4. **'What a man ought to be like'** (487e9): i.e., just or unjust.

27.5. **'And what he ought to practice'** (487e9-488a1): i.e., knowledge or not knowledge.

27.6. **'And how far'** (488a1): in youth alone, like Callicles claims, or until old age.

27.7. **'That my fault is not voluntary'** (488a3): observe that [Socrates] states that wrongdoing is involuntary because falsehood is

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<sup>517</sup> We were introduced to the relation between the characters of the dialogue and the kinds of psychic character they represent at 0.8. It seems clear that the three interlocutors are thought to have character-flaws belonging to the rational, spirited, and appetitive parts of the soul respectively. Note that Ol. assumes that control of the these three faults removes impediments to our acceptance of the common notions, though the evidence of Proclus suggests that Gorgias' flaw was above all the distortion of the common notions, *In Alc.* 104: ἡ κοινὴ καὶ ἀδιάστροφος ἔννοια, cf. *In Tim.* 1.168.25-27 etc. See also note on 0.8.

<sup>518</sup> Evidently a formula for concluding the *theoria*.

involuntary. We reason wrongly when we make a false judgement about the universal premise.<sup>519</sup>

27.8. **'A complete idiot'** (488a8): i.e. 'Stupid in his aims'. The term [for 'stupid'] (*blax*) comes from the word 'soft' (*malakos*), as if<sup>520</sup> someone is a 'softie' (*malax*); then [the word] would have become *mlax*, and then, because the 'm' and the 'l' do not run into each other, the 'm' turned into the 'b', resulting in *blax*. Observe that we should understand both the end, which is the good, and also the road that leads to the end.<sup>521</sup>

27.9. **'For me again from the beginning'** (488b2): he takes up what had been said by Callicles, and asks 'What do the terms 'stronger' and so on mean to you?'. And a deduction is constructed, as I have said.

27.10. **'Or is it possible to be a better man, but inferior'** (488c7): 'Or perhaps it is not the same, but a man can be 'better', but inferior and weaker? Make this point nice and clear for me.'

## Lecture 28 (488d4-491d3)<sup>522</sup>

28.1. **'I am telling you clearly that they're the same'** (488d4): as was said earlier, [Socrates] fastened upon the terms [Callicles used] and said 'What do you mean by the finer and the superior: do you mean with respect to bodily strength or with respect to courage: with understanding or without understanding?' First [Socrates] takes up bodily strength, and reasons 'If the just is good and fine according to the many, and the many are [physically] stronger than one individual, and the [physically] stronger are superior and better, and the better and superior [dictate what is good and fine] by nature, then justice is [good and fine] by nature'. Callicles is vexed by this and insults Socrates 'You are chattering away and hunting down words' You shouldn't have

<sup>519</sup> Ol. claims to identify the connection between involuntary action, error, and assent to a false major premise: cf. 10.3.

<sup>520</sup> Reading οἶον with the scholiast for the MS ἢ οὖν: probably an aural mistake.

<sup>521</sup> The last sentence of 27.8 does not seem to belong here. It appears to relate to 488a5-6 where we find the distinction between what Socrates should practise and by what means he should come to it.

<sup>522</sup> Lecture 28 deals with Socrates' efforts to clarify Callicles' concept of the superior person. Either Ol. or the recorder has got into difficulties attempting to analyse the arguments underlying Socrates' words.

seized upon my careless use of one term, for I do not mean those who are physically strong'.<sup>523</sup>

Now in the first place Socrates is not chattering away, but quite the contrary is dragging [Callicles] towards the good, and furthermore Callicles is revealing his ignorance in agreeing that he made a mistake in his contribution. Next Socrates says 'You didn't mean this, did you? I too knew that you didn't mean it'. With these words [Socrates] puts him down while simultaneously exhibiting a measured disposition.

28.2. So Socrates says to him 'Perhaps you meant the wise?' And he replies yes, 'Yes, that is what I meant to say'. Observe that once more he does not put anything in his own words. So when he said this, Socrates responds 'The wise are the stronger and better. So they need to have more in this very respect, namely to be wiser

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<sup>523</sup> 'Chattering away' is a paraphrase of 489b8. Ol. takes the argument at 488d5-489b6 to be building on the preliminary argument *implicit* in 488b-c, which he articulated at 27.3. He now adds reference to Callicles' 'by nature' thus:

The first three premises of the new argument in 28.1 are the same as those of 27.3, viz.,

- i. Justice is fine and good among the many
- ii. The many are stronger than an individual
- iii. The stronger (than an individual) are better and more excellent

Ol. now adds:

- iv. The better and more excellent are so by nature
- v. Therefore, justice is so by nature

Perhaps v. should be read as 'justice (among the many) is so by nature'. Socrates' conclusion in Plato's text (489a8-b1) is that what the many take to be justice (viz. having an equal share), and that it is more shameful to commit injustice than to suffer it, is so not *only* by rule or convention but *also* by nature. Though Ol. does not state the conclusion in the Platonic text, his reconstruction of the argument is not unreasonable. For, he takes Socrates' argument to be an attempt to overturn Callicles' understanding of superiority in terms of strength as a basis for what justice is by nature (sc. for the strong to pursue conventional injustice). Premises ii. and iii. have to be acceptable to Callicles because they embody his understanding of superiority in terms of strength. Premise iv. represents Callicles' commitment in 483d-484c, and premise i. he acknowledges throughout. The combination of these premises presents Callicles with a dilemma: either he sticks to iv. and gives a different understanding of superiority than that contained in premises ii. and iii., or he has to accept the unwelcome conclusion that conventional justice can *also* be shown to be so by nature because those who uphold it are *naturally* stronger than the one (or the minority) who attempt to oppose it. The upshot is that there is a tension between Callicles' dichotomy between what is just by nature and what is just by rule, on the one hand, and his understanding of natural superiority in terms of strength, on the other. Ol. picks up Callicles' *very quick* retraction, at 488c, of any identification of the superior with the stronger (either physically or by virtue of superior numbers).

than the others. For example, if there exists a single doctor among many who are not doctors, that one will be wise, so let him prescribe beef for some and other meat for others. Now, if the doctor is weak, will he need to eat more than the others so as to be ill? In no way. Hence *this* is not the [relevant] ‘more’, but he has ‘more’ in wisdom. Furthermore this is what the weaver has more of than non-experts, expertise—not wearing a lot more clothes, for in that case he would be a laughing-stock. And likewise with the shoe-maker’.

Callicles then replies ‘What? Am I saying that these people have the greater share in regard to dressing and eating? Certainly not, but [that they have the greater share] in regard to grabbing money and such like’. So Socrates invites him to state his views in full—what he really means—and thus refutes him. Note that he said to him ‘Do you mean the wise?’, because all men hasten to lay claim to wisdom for their own benefit, and similarly with †temperance†.<sup>524</sup> Had he said ‘the just’, Callicles would have dissociated himself at once.

28.3. Socrates, then, constructs the following deduction:

(A) ‘Having more than one ought is thought(c)<sup>525</sup> damaging and

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<sup>524</sup> W. suggests that this should surely be ‘courage’. This is not certain: σωφροσύνη can also come close to meaning a ‘predisposition towards sensible behaviour’, which might be felt by all to be desirable, while at the same time being easier to claim than courage, since the latter or its absence may be easier to detect publically. *Protagoras* 323b implies that those who do not lay claim to civic virtue as a whole (including justice and σωφροσύνη) are crazy. However, an exception has to be made for justice at this point in *Grg.*, and might likewise be made for σωφροσύνη. The end of 28.3 suggests that the situation with regard to courage is analogous to that of wisdom, and 0.7 confirms that they are popularly viewed as desirable in contrast with justice and temperance. Thus on balance it is likely that the text is faulty here. Perhaps one should postulate a lacuna and read ὡσαύτως καὶ <ἀνδρείας, οὐκέτι δὲ δικαιοσύνης καὶ> σωφροσύνης.

<sup>525</sup> It is necessary here to realize that Ol. is deriving his examples from a different version of the argument at 488d-489a, a version that substitutes ‘the wise’ for ‘the many’ in accordance with Callicles’ clarification at 489e, and in accordance with Socrates’ traditional respect for the few experts rather than the masses: thus producing an argument that might be thought compatible with Socrates’ own beliefs rather than one which would have to be regarded as *ad hominem*. Following Plato, Ol. assumes a close connexion between νόμος as ‘convention/law’ and the verb νομίζειν, meaning ‘to think’, so that ‘x thinks’ will mean ‘x makes it a convention/law for himself’. Thus ‘think(c) x’ here stands for ‘think in a manner that makes x conventional/lawful’. This is a further reason why Ol., who follows the *Cratylus* (395e-396b) in making νόμος the allocation of intelligence (26.3), is obliged to link conventional wisdom with the view of the intelligent rather than the masses.

base among the wise, what is thought(c) among the wise is thought(c) among the superior and better, what is thought(c) among the superior and better is so by nature, therefore what is just [i.e. having a fair share]<sup>526</sup>, being in accord with convention, is <also><sup>527</sup> in accord with nature'.

Similarly in the opposite way: (B) 'Having an unjust share is thought(c) good and fine among the unwise, what is thought(c) among the unwise is not thought(c) among the stronger and the better, what is not thought(c) among the latter is not in accord with nature, therefore what is unjust, as it is not in accord with convention, is not in accord with nature either'.<sup>528</sup> Let that suffice concerning Socrates' deductions.

<sup>526</sup> Needed to make any sense of the argument.

<sup>527</sup> Reading <καὶ> κατὰ φύσιν at 129.45.

<sup>528</sup> These arguments are not particularly clear, and there are grounds for doubt about the text. Note that the conclusions of arguments 1 and 2 are parallel:

Concl. 1: τὸ ἄρα δίκαιον νόμῳ ὃν <καὶ> κατὰ φύσιν ἐστίν. (So what is just, as it accords with convention, also accords with nature.)

Concl. 2: τὸ ἄρα ἀδίκον νόμῳ μὴ ὃν οὐδὲ παρὰ τῇ φύσει ἐστίν. (So what's unjust, as it does not accord with convention, does not accord with nature either.)

The two conclusions separate out into two propositions Plato's conclusion at 489a-b: Οὐ νόμῳ ἄρα μόνον ἐστίν αἰσχρὸν τὸ ἀδικεῖν τοῦ ἀδικεῖσθαι, οὐδὲ δίκαιον τὸ ἴσον ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ φύσει.

So when Ol. talks, in the first conclusion, of τὸ δίκαιον he is thinking of 'having a fair share'. This will enable us to offer a reasonably coherent account of the arguments which do not require any major textual surgery, although it will presume that Ol. can be worryingly concise. In the following reconstruction the letters have the following meanings: B = bad, G = good, N = non-fair distribution, F = fair distribution, subscript c = by convention, subscript n = by nature, U = unwise, W = wise, S = strong/good

Arg.1 All N is (B<sub>c</sub> for W)  
 All (B<sub>c</sub> for W) is (B<sub>c</sub> for S)  
 But (x)(all (x<sub>c</sub> for S) is x<sub>n</sub>)  
 (so All (B<sub>c</sub> for S) is B<sub>n</sub>)  
 (so All N is B<sub>n</sub>)  
 (But All distributions must be either N or F)  
 (And Nothing can be both B<sub>n</sub> and G<sub>n</sub>)  
 Hence Only F can be G<sub>n</sub>

The actual conclusion that seems to be recorded is: All F (qua G<sub>c</sub>) is G<sub>n</sub>. This does indeed seem to be Plato's conclusion at 489b1. Ol. might have been better advised to derive it from the premises All F is (G<sub>c</sub> for W), all (G<sub>c</sub> for W) is (G<sub>c</sub> for S), all (G<sub>c</sub> for S) is G<sub>n</sub>.

Arg.2 All N is (G<sub>c</sub> for U)  
 No (G<sub>c</sub> for U) is (G<sub>c</sub> for S)  
 (All N is —(G<sub>c</sub> for S))  
 No —(G<sub>c</sub> for S) is G<sub>n</sub>  
 All N is —G<sub>n</sub>.

But because [Socrates] uses as examples doctor, weaver and shoemaker, Callicles says to him. 'You are always telling me the same things', and Socrates replies 'Not only the same things but also about the same things'. That's how secure demonstrations are.<sup>529</sup>

Callicles associates courage with wisdom, saying 'I say the wise and the courageous are better and superior'. So Socrates says 'Observe how sharply we differ: for I say the same about the same things, whereas you say different things at different times. For just now you referred only to the wise, whereas now you are also using the term courageous. So tell me precisely and define those of whom you are speaking.

28.4. **'I've been guessing myself for some time'** (489d1): Socrates says 'I was supposing that was what you meant, but you are incapable of being precise'. How did Socrates know that [Callicles] meant they were the same? It is because however far someone is submerged in evil, he cannot fail to have some kind of awareness of the common notions.<sup>530</sup>

28.5. **'Desert your school'** (489d7-8): [Socrates] may be speaking ironically, but at least he is making an honest point.<sup>531</sup> For he is teaching him not to be rough but mild. After Callicles had said 'You are speaking ironically', Socrates says 'No, by Zethus'. He swears playfully by Zethus because Callicles had earlier referred to Zethus and Amphion when he spoke ironically of him, saying 'You have a courageous soul' (485e).

28.6. **'All together'** (490b2): 'all together' is well said, meaning 'all at the same time'; there could be many, without their being all together simultaneously.

28.7. **'But also courageous'** (491b2): observe how he now adds 'courageous'.

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<sup>529</sup> See *Grg.* 508e-509a, *Meno* 98a. The confidence in apodeictic argument, inherited perhaps from Ammonius (see 41.9), is more reminiscent of Galen than of Iamblichus!

<sup>530</sup> See 21.2, 25.1: Callicles is a long way away from the common notions, and is not aware of their existence.

<sup>531</sup> Ol. underlines the moral force of the irony, and its honest message. He recognizes Socratic irony (*In Alc.* 52-53) which was known as early as Cicero (*de Orat.* 2.270, *Brut.* 292, *Ac.* 2.74), but does not believe Plato shared it (*In Alc.* 2.150); he also believes that a philosopher's irony must contain truth (*In Alc.* 88). In the present commentary Ol. speaks of irony at 18.3, 6, 13, 15, 19.11, 13, 20.1 (all Polus), and 32.13 (Socrates).

28.8. **'You and I don't accuse each other'** (491b5-6): 'You attack me for saying the same things, while I attack you for not saying the same things, but different things at different times. So, my good man, say precisely who you say these [superior persons] are'.

## Lecture 29 (491d4-492c2)<sup>532</sup>

29.1. **'But what about themselves, my friend?'** (491d4): they had been expressing themselves imprecisely and without explanation of their terms, and both of them were speaking of a wise and courageous man, saying that wise and courageous men have the greater share. But Socrates understood 'wisdom' and 'courage' and having more in one sense, and Callicles in another. So Socrates seeks to lead him toward the other virtue, I mean temperance. Next, because even Callicles was able to be healed, [Socrates] does not begin directly with [the virtue of temperance] but first says to him 'Should a ruler over someone first rule himself or not?'<sup>533</sup> Callicles, however, does not understand what he is saying to him, but asks this 'What eh?', <sup>534</sup> that is, 'What do you mean?' Socrates

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<sup>532</sup> In lecture 29 treats Socrates' introduction of the notion of self-mastery, Callicles' tirade against temperance, outlines the six persuasive devices which follow, treat the first two of them to his satisfaction, and prepares us for an allegorical interpretation of the Water-Carriers myth.

<sup>533</sup> Ol. understands Socrates as adopting a pedagogic, therapeutic, attitude to Callicles: Socrates takes an indirect route because even someone as bad as Callicles can be morally helped.

<sup>534</sup> Reading ὅ<τι> 'τιῇ' τοῦτο or ὅ<τι> 'τί ἡ' τοῦτο at 151.12. There are textual problems at this point both in Ol. and in the Plato MSS. It seems reasonable to explain the demonstrative, which certainly does not occur in Plato's text, as indicating one particular small word or phrase in the text before the class. In view of the fact that we read simply ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγεις rather than ἀντὶ τοῦ τί λέγεις it may be that Ol. has erroneously interpreted the single eta as a form of the imperfect of ἡμί 'I say', and that he particularly wants to comment on this form. The overall thrust, however, is not in doubt, nor is the fact that Ol. is attributing part of 491d4 to Callicles, as Dodds but not Burnet. Note that a scholion clearly reads τί ἡ τί, but seems to be reading this as the *answer* to ἄρχοντας ἢ ἀρχομένους. Thus it is no surprise that Ol.'s text is best explained if he were reading Plato along the following lines:

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; αὐτῶν, ὃ ἐταῖρε, ἄρχοντας ἢ ἀρχομένους; In Ol. , 'Should a ruler over someone first rule himself or not?'

ΚΑ. Τί ἡ; τί; 'What did he say?'

ΣΩ. Ἐνα ἕκαστον λέγω αὐτὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἄρχοντα; 'Must he rule himself or not?'

ΚΑ. [pause] And again he does not understand,...



asks again 'Must he rule himself or not?' And again he does not understand, and again he asks the question.

[Callicles] suspected that Socrates was saying to him that someone who *would* rule himself was a man without a father, with the freedom to do everything he wanted to do.<sup>535</sup> Since he does not understand, Socrates says 'I shall explain to you, and I mean by ruler of himself a man who has power over his own desires and intemperate pleasures, a man who is temperate'. And as a result it is revealed that according to Callicles the final cause is base pleasure. What it is according to Socrates we shall learn later. Hence Callicles says 'It is a simpleton you call temperate'. He says this because to each virtue there correspond two vices.<sup>536</sup> So he himself being intemperate describes those who are temperate as simpletons, but Socrates says 'It's not them I am describing'.

29.2. Then Callicles begins to speak against temperance, saying that those who lack the resources to spend on base pleasures say that temperance is fine, whereas those who possess the resources turn their backs on it. So if the sons of kings and dynasts wished to respect laws, or the speech and criticism that enjoined them not to commit adultery ('law' is written, and 'speech and criticism' is unwritten), then they would not be living as they wished. So we should reach out for pleasure and seek to possess it. Callicles speaks of the sons of kings rather than kings themselves, since it is their offspring, being young, who live in a disorderly manner.<sup>537</sup>

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ΣΩ. Ἡ τοῦτο μὲν οὐδὲν δεῖ, αὐτὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἄρχειν, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων; and again he asks the question.

ΚΑ. Πῶς ἑαυτοῦ ἄρχοντα λέγεις; Callicles suspected etc.

ΣΩ. Οὐδὲν ποικίλον .... 'I shall explain to you ....'

To get from here to our various MSS texts we have to assume the following. Τί ἦ; τί; gets glossed Πῶς λέγεις; following the same explanation as that of Olympiodorus. Hence Τί ἦ τί is ousted by Πῶς λέγεις; and somehow becomes inserted into the sentence above.

<sup>535</sup> The phrase 'man without a father' must here denote legal independence from fatherly rule or self-dependence. According to Ol. Callicles takes (mistakenly) Socrates' reference to self-rule to denote a mature person not under the authority of the father: presumably because of the father's death. Ol. feels obliged to offer a possible erroneous interpretation of the notion of self-rule, since Callicles is now clear for the first time that 'rule' and 'self' are the words that count, but not clear about their meaning.

<sup>536</sup> Ol. clearly refers here to the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean (cf. *EN* 2.5 etc.), about there being two excesses corresponding to each virtue. His use of the doctrine makes the interesting point that from the perspective of each excess the virtue (the mean) looks foolish.

<sup>537</sup> Ol. interprets Callicles in terms of Polus' equation of free will with the opportunity for self-initiated action, whether good or bad; the sons of kings

Note that [Socrates] invites Callicles to expound every claim in favour of base pleasure, so that nothing should remain unrefuted. It is worth inquiring whether or not we should welcome people admitting to their own evils. We say that if someone speaks in repentance and from a desire to be converted, then we ought to be delighted that he brings evils into the open, in order that they be driven out.<sup>538</sup> So too a doctor delights when [diseased] matter emerges, and says 'It is good that it has come out.' But if people try to deliver demonstrations in favour of their own evil conduct then we must muzzle them. So Socrates makes Callicles say everything, so as to muzzle him and teach him.<sup>539</sup>

29.3. Now Socrates refutes him in six lines of attack, three based on received opinions, and three on more technical arguments.<sup>540</sup> Of the lines of attack based on received opinions, the first is drawn from the view of the many, the second from the poets, and the

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and dynasts, i.e. those who have the resources to pursue pleasures unchecked, would not be living the life they 'wished' if they observed the written or the unwritten laws. Though Plato's text contains a reference to 'sons of kings' (492b2), Ol.'s restriction of living in a disorderly manner to *the young* introduces a new piece of moralizing, probably independent of the idea that the new generation is always responsible for a political shift for the worse (as in *Rep.* 8). For the theme of the natural inclination of the young towards giving into the passions see also 1.6, 5.3, 26.13.

<sup>538</sup> Westerink, (1990) xxx, detects an allusion to Christian confession and repentance.

<sup>539</sup> Ol. is clearly recalling Callicles' accusation that Socrates muzzles (ἐπιστομίζειν) his interlocutors at 482e1-2, and attributes to the practice a therapeutic purpose. Thus he sees truth in Callicles' words even though the term was not used by the Platonic Socrates to describe the aim of *elenchos*. Callicles' original complaint was that both Gorgias and Polus were muzzled because they were ashamed to admit what they really thought, whereas he himself is not afraid to embrace what the many regard as evil. Ol.'s point may be that since we regard the repentant admission of one's own evil as curative and, hence, to be welcomed, so in the case of *unrepentant* explicit justification of evil what we should welcome as curative is the muzzling of the (implicit) perverted rationality; a muzzling only possible if the full extent of such perversity becomes public. Callicles will be taught by such muzzling because it involves the bringing out into the open the (hidden) perversity of his (open) rationalizing.

<sup>540</sup> By 'technical' (πραγματιώδης) we take Ol. to mean 'learned' (cf. *πραγματεία*, text-book or specialized treatise). LSJ also cites (a) 'laborious', (b) 'serious, important, based on reality', or (c) 'concerned with facts or realities'. Ol.'s way of interpreting Socrates' argumentation from 493d5 ff. tends to support reading *πραγματιωδέστερον* as meaning something nearer to (c), though not necessarily excluding the ideas of importance or weightiness in (b). Overall the contrast between the two sets of three arguments seems to be between those based on received opinions and those based on general substantive facts or realities. See Lycos (1994).

third from the Pythagoreans. Of the technical arguments, the first is drawn from a visualization, as we shall see, the second from the use of inconsistent examples, and the third from demonstration, either direct or one that leads to an impossibility.

Of the arguments based on *received opinions*, the *first* is this: 'The many use "blessed" for the man who needs nothing, the man who needs nothing does not steal or commit injustice but is in control of all base [impulses], therefore the †blessed man is just and happy†'.<sup>541</sup> To this Callicles replies 'Then stones, which need nothing, are happy'.<sup>542</sup> He takes it in an unnatural sense. For 'not needing' means either having many possessions and so not being in need, or being of a nature to get things but still not being in need of them. So no-one says that a dog is <il>literate, since it is not in its nature to be so. Similarly no-one says that a stone is <not> in need, since it is not in its nature to be so.<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> W. suggests that the conclusion ought to read 'the just are (those) who are blessed and happy' rather than as Ol. has it 'the blessed are just and happy'. While the absence of the terms 'blessed' and 'just' from Plato's text is a source of potential confusion, 'happy' is close in meaning to 'blessed', which can only be a word which Ol. has substituted for it. In fact Ol.'s first premise is simply his version of 492e3-4. But on reaching the conclusion we are forced to make the identification of Ol.'s 'blessed' (μακάριος) and Plato's 'happy' (εὐδαίμων), because this latter is precisely the term which Callicles will pick on. Either recorder or scribe has realized this and imported the term 'happy' (εὐδαίμων) into Ol.'s conclusion: but did so in a manner detrimental to the argument. Why? Probably because the original argument had δίκαιός ἐστι καὶ σώφρων, the notion of σωφροσύνη being clearly implied in the notion of controlling base impulses, which is coupled with justice in the second premise, and it needs to be coupled with it in the conclusion as well: for temperance is of greater relevance for this part of *Grg.* than justice, and it is coupled with justice by Callicles himself at 492a8-b1, b4-5, and c1.

The argument as Ol. contrued it, was surely:

- i. (The many say:) The blessed are those who need nothing
- ii. Those who need nothing are those who refrain from injustice and control all base impulses
- iii. Therefore, the blessed are just (=those who refrain from injustice, etc.) and temperate.

When this is understood, we can readily appreciate how Ol. has turned a single sentence in Plato that makes no reference to temperance into one of six arguments against Callicles' position on temperance.

<sup>542</sup> Ol. omits Plato's 'and corpses'.

<sup>543</sup> W. adds two negatives, and thus makes Ol.'s point an interesting one. He is claiming that Callicles' inference involves something like a category mistake: there are two cases of the correct application of the expression 'does not need', (a) where the subject does not desire to possess something, though it could so desire; and (b) where the subject already possesses something. Neither of these hold in the case of stones, so it is not correct to say 'stones do not need anything'. Ol. draws the parallel with the incorrectness of saying

The *second* proof comes from Euripides—since Callicles too cited Euripides<sup>544</sup>—and [Socrates] says 'Euripides says to live is to die, and to die is to live.' For on coming here, the soul, so that it may give life to the body, also gets a share in a certain lifelessness.<sup>545</sup> And this is evil. So it is when it is separated that it is really alive, because it is dead here through participation in lifelessness; and so the body is a cause of evils—hence we should master it.<sup>546</sup>

29.4. The argument from the Pythagoreans is symbolic. For it employs a short myth, which says 'We are dead here and we inhabit a tomb. But there we find Hades and two jars, one of them leaking, the other sound. Now those who have been initiated in this life are represented by the sound jar, and those who have not been initiated bring water in a sieve to put it in the leaky jar. So they endure insufferable torments. For first, how can they bring the water with a sieve? And second, even if this were possible, the jar would run out as it was being filled. We should not stop at this superficial level, but expound what it means for us to be dead, what the tomb is, who the initiated and the uninitiated are, what the sound and the leaking jars are, what the water is, and what the sieve is.<sup>547</sup> But let us leave these matters for another lecture, and let the text now be read.<sup>548</sup>

29.5. '**Than for their enemies**' (492c2): 'Those seeking to be just render no advantages to their friends nor do they harm their enemies. So we should be grasping,' [Callicles] says, 'and indulge in pleasures'.

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'dogs are not literate', for the correctness of applying 'not literate' presupposes either (a) that the subject could possess literacy though it has not acquired it, or (b) that the subject has lost something it already had. Neither of these apply to dogs since it is not in their nature to either gain or lose literacy.

<sup>544</sup> Fr. 638N, *Grg.* 484e6-7. Ol. notes the correspondence, as Socrates uses Callicles' authority, Euripides, against him.

<sup>545</sup> See 30.1 with note.

<sup>546</sup> Ol. develops Socrates' point in terms of Platonist doctrines of the soul and its relation to the body, showing how *Grg.* makes an appropriate preparation for *Phd.*, the next work in the curriculum. Note that here too Ol. adds material to Plato's reference to Euripides in order to turn it specifically into an argument for temperance: control of the body.

<sup>547</sup> Ol.'s preference for platonist allegorizing of myths over literal readings is explained in lectures 46-49.

<sup>548</sup> This is an interesting comment concerning class procedure. It is to be the only occasion in this work where Ol. asks for a reading. In view of the brevity of the *lexis* at the end of lecture 29, the instruction is unlikely to be to read *his comment* aloud. Presumably that *lexis* is the reading of the text itself which will prompt comments on certain points, sometimes more, sometimes less.

**Lecture 30<sup>549</sup> (492e-495b)**

30.1. ‘That’s what I say’ (492e): I have already said (25.1) that what they are seeking is the final cause of well-being. So we need to show that it is not pleasure which is the end, which is Callicles’ belief, but the good. So he sets out six lines of attack, two of which I have dealt with. Next let me treat the *Pythagorean* line of attack, and unravel the myth. Note that we are said to be dead, because our soul gets a share in lifelessness.<sup>550</sup> The identity of the tomb that we carry around he has himself revealed—for he calls the tomb our grave and the grave our body.<sup>551</sup> He calls Hades ‘the dark’, because we are ‘in the dark’ when the soul is enslaved to the body.<sup>552</sup>

He calls the desires ‘wine-jars’, either from our being eager to fulfil our desires like filling storage-jars, or from our persuading ourselves that desire is fine.<sup>553</sup> Those with the sound jar are those fully initiated in the rite, meaning those who have attained full insight. Their having a filled wine-jar stands for their having full virtue; the uninitiated stand for those who have nothing perfect. They have leaky jars, since those who are subservient to their desires always need to fulfil them, and are damaged more by their fire, and hence have their wine-jars perforated, so they can never be filled. The sieve stands for the rational soul when involved with the irrational.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> In lecture 30 Ol. tackles numbers two to five of what he sees as six attacks on Calliclean hedonism: the ‘Pythagorean’ interpretation of the Water-Carriers myth, the visualization of temperate and intemperate persons in terms of the guardians of sound and unsound jars respectively, and the use of counter-examples to challenge Callicles’ general identification of pleasure with the good.

<sup>550</sup> See 29.4. Its sharing in lifelessness may seem an odd notion in the light of the final argument for the immortality of the soul in *Phd.* (the soul cannot receive death, see 105de), particularly if there is no distinction between lifelessness and death as this text may suggest. But Ol. is only claiming that we are *said to be dead*, not that we are. It is a commonplace that matter *per se* is lifeless, and presumably his claim that the soul takes a share of lifeless matter is not a claim that lifelessness can be *predicated* of the embodied soul.

<sup>551</sup> There is wordplay on σῆμα (‘grave’) and σώμα. Wordplay is a regular feature of Ol.’s interpretation of myths, cf. Kronos 47.3, Zeus 47.4.

<sup>552</sup> There is further unspoken wordplay on *Hades* and αἰδής, following 493b4 and *Phd.* 81c11, but αἰδής is replaced with its synonym ἄφανής.

<sup>553</sup> Wordplay on πίθος and πείθω, cf. 493a-b. Oddly Ol. suggests an alternative wordplay on πίθος and ἐπιθυμία, not to be found in *Grg.*

<sup>554</sup> There seems to be a distinction between descended and undescended

30.2. Note that the soul is called a circle because it carries out investigation itself and is itself investigated, makes discoveries itself and is itself discovered. But the non-rational resembles a straight line, since it does not turn back upon itself like the circle.<sup>555</sup> So since the sieve is circular, it corresponds to the soul, but since it has a layer of straight lines underneath resulting from the holes, it also corresponds to the non-rational, for the parts separating the holes run in straight lines.<sup>556</sup> So by the sieve he signifies the rational soul with a lower layer that is non-rational. The water is the flux of nature. For as Heraclitus says, 'becoming watery is death for souls'.<sup>557</sup> This is the symbolism, hence we need to constitute ourselves properly.<sup>558</sup> He calls such myths 'not completely crazy'<sup>559</sup> by way of contrast with the poets, since theirs are harmful, whereas these ones benefit people of good sense.<sup>560</sup>

30.3. Callicles is unimpressed with this, so [Socrates] next proceeds to the technical arguments, and he begins with a *visualization*. For he says 'Let there be two people with wine-jars, putting into them substances that are difficult to obtain'. Observe that this is more or less the same line of attack as the Pythagorean one. That is why Socrates actually tells him to listen to another example from

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rational soul. For an earlier glimpse into Ol.'s psychology, see 2.1 etc.

<sup>555</sup> Perhaps Ol. has in mind *Tim.*, which regularly contrasts the circular motions of soul with the straight motions associated with physical locomotion. Cf. *Proc. In Tim.* 2.244.12-245.23 on 36b.

<sup>556</sup> There is some uncertainty over the exact nature of these straight lines, but they may be interwoven strips of leather so placed as to leave holes of the desired size.

<sup>557</sup> See Heraclitus B36 (from Clement), and B77 (from Numenius via Porphyry).

<sup>558</sup> Thus the myth's message is that we should strive for the correct relation between the faculties of our souls, once again involving the virtues of justice and temperance. Hence again Ol. concludes his interpretation by showing how Socrates' words serve to undermine Callicles' position on temperance.

<sup>559</sup> 'All fairly strange' in Irwin's translation, but Ol. does not reproduce Plato's Greek exactly. The word *ἄτοπος* frequently indicates logical absurdity, but 'strange' is a reasonable (if weak) translation of the word in Plato, while 'crazy' is preferred here since it has the twin associations of strangeness and harmfulness.

<sup>560</sup> The contrast between poets' and philosophers' myths is developed at length later (46ff.). Ol.'s usual contrast is that the surface meaning of philosophical myth, while absurd, is not harmful to the uninitiated. Here he makes stronger claims, that the surface meaning of philosophical myth is *less* absurd, and that they are of benefit to the wise—he does not say why poetic myths, after allegorical decoding, are not also beneficial to the wise. See 46.6, below.

the same school. 'Let them put in things difficult to obtain, like milk, honey, wine and so on, and again let one jar be sound, and the other leaky. Who then has the most toil, the person with the full jar, or the one who has the leaky jar, but squeezes out, processes, or buys the greater quantity?' Note that it is the one with the filled jar who is happy and obtains respite, while the other toils on.<sup>561</sup>

[Socrates] used the words 'difficult to obtain' because these are external things, and are consequently a problem to acquire. Virtue, however, which is in our power, we acquire more quickly, for it is bright and clear. Hence Aristotle says in the *Metaphysics* that divine things are both the brightest and invisible.<sup>562</sup> They are brightest in their own activity, but invisible to us in our blindness. Just as the sun is always the brightest body but invisible to bats because they are not adapted to it, so too divine things are invisible to us creatures of the night.<sup>563</sup> Not even in this way, however, does he convince Callicles of what he wants to.

Next he employs the line of attack from *inconsistent examples*. He says 'Since you call pleasure well-being, are itchers happy, since they get much pleasure from scratching?'

30.4. Callicles retorts 'You're being a demagogue, Socrates, because you're saying what pleases the mob. *These people* would not say such people were happy.' Socrates sees that Callicles is infected with a considerable lack of shame, but he does allow himself to feel shame because he knows it can sometimes be harmful—for that man too says 'Shame, which does great damage to men'<sup>564</sup>—but he is compelled also to tackle base matters, if he expects to be

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<sup>561</sup> Ol. does not explain why the first technical argument, which he admits is very like the third argument from received opinions, is in a different category.

<sup>562</sup> *Met.* 993b7-11, but Ol. may also have the introduction to the *Physics* in mind (184a10-23), where Aristotle contrasts the brightness of first principles by nature with their obscurity to us. The theme is much used in later Neoplatonism. It is typical of Neoplatonism to immediately think of Aristotelian first principles as 'divine'. The bat illustration is taken from the short alternative introduction to *Met.* (993b9-11).

<sup>563</sup> The Greek word for bat derives from the word for 'night'.

<sup>564</sup> Quotation from Hesiod *Op.* 318, and (with little change) from Homer *Il.* 24.44-45 (lines whose authenticity was doubted in antiquity by Aristarchus), used by Ol. at 11.3 above. Both texts add 'and benefits them' at the end, highlighting the potential of shame for good as well as evil. A Platonic text taking the same stance on shame is *Chrm.* 161a, which uses a different Homeric quotation.

persuasive. So he says 'Then surely the life of passive homosexuals is also happy, because they take pleasure in their unseemly acts, and yet such people are awful, base and wretched.' 'Awful' is used for 'very bad' because they have fallen from goodness, 'base' because they are wedded to the material world, 'wretched' because they have no hope of salvation.

Since not even this approach succeeds in producing persuasion, he is compelled next to employ a different form of demonstration. Callicles maintains 'The pleasant and the good are the same as far as I'm concerned'. Later, he will say that *some* pleasure is good, but not all. And then Socrates will show him what sort of pleasure is good and what sort is not.

30.5. **'Some Sicilian'** (493a6:) e.g. Empedocles, for he was a Pythagorean, and was a native of Acragas in Sicily.<sup>565</sup>

30.6. **'From its disbelief<sup>566</sup> and forgetfulness'** (493c3): 'Disbelief' by virtue of their never receiving the message at all, 'forgetfulness' by virtue of their receiving it, but forgetting.

30.7. **'You're nearer the truth there'** (493d4): 'Because you are relating myths, and I do not believe myths'.

30.8. **'Torrent-bird's'** (494b6): he alludes either to a creature that eats and immediately excretes, or to the very hollows in the rocks [of a waterfall], which receive the water and then cast it out. Hence the man with the full jar lives a divine life, but Callicles thinks he lives the life of a stone.<sup>567</sup>

30.9. **'Mind you don't slacken from shame'** (494c5): i.e. 'Don't be ashamed, but say what it is that's bothering you'.

30.10. **'The life of catamites'** (494e4): he is acting like a doctor

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<sup>565</sup> The characteristic (especially post-Iamblichan) Platonist claim that Empedocles is a Pythagorean (compare 0.9, 35.12). Tarrant has discussed the supposed influence of Pythagoras on Presocratics and later respectable Greek philosophy, (1993) ch. 4.i and 6.i, but see more particularly Mansfeld (1992), 50-52, 243-316. The Pythagorized Empedocles of the late Neopythagoreans (Syrianus, Asclepius, Philoponus, Simplicius) is discussed at 245-62.

<sup>566</sup> Irwin's lemma reads: 'from its unreliability and forgetfulness', but it is clear that Ol. understands the term ἀπιστία in a different sense.

<sup>567</sup> Although it is not clearly expressed, Ol.'s point is subtle: Socrates' image succeeds in comparing the man with the leaky jars with both a despised creature (in fact a bird, possibly a stone-curlew) and the very rocks of a waterfall (which gives the bird its name). Correspondingly one could compare the man with full jars with a revered creature (a God), or (as Callicles does) with a (motionless) stone: for the word λίθος was used for those showing no inclination to activity, see Ar. *Clouds* 1202, Thgn. 568, Pl. *Hp.Ma.* 292d5.



who is not ashamed to remove the embryo by cutting, but applies himself even to what is unholy in the interests of expediency.<sup>568</sup>

30.11. ‘Well, so that I don’t leave my argument’ (495a5): texts read either ‘unagreed’ or ‘not agreed’,<sup>569</sup> but if we read ‘unagreed’, he is declaring his view: ‘So that I shall be inconsistent, I say that ‘pleasant’ and ‘good’ are the same thing’.<sup>570</sup> Whereas if we read ‘not agreed’, he is advancing a moral objection,<sup>571</sup> saying ‘You are bringing me to these [unseemly examples], Socrates; so that I shall not agree, [I say] that ‘pleasant’ and ‘good’ are the same thing’.<sup>572</sup> But rather declaring one’s view is preferable. That is why Socrates says ‘You are contradicting yourself, for you said that one should say what one thinks.’<sup>573</sup> How is it that you are saying this for argument’s sake? Admit whether you [really] believe that ‘pleasant’ and ‘good’ are the same thing. For if in fact that is your position, one has to refute it, but if it is not your position and you are merely mouthing it, a refutation is unnecessary. It is one’s purpose that is refuted, not a mere statement.’

<sup>568</sup> Compare 17.2-3 for this last resort for the obstetrician.

<sup>569</sup> For notes on inconsistency in the manuscript tradition see also 14.16, 24.4, 7. The best manuscript authority now favours ‘not unagreed’, and thus differs worryingly from both readings which Ol. knew, but F has ‘not agreed’.

<sup>570</sup> Reading not λέγων (with the corrector), but λέγω (with the original hand) as the text of 495a6 should make obvious. Callicles would then be embracing the label ‘inconsistent’ earlier applied to him by Socrates, and acknowledging that his attitude towards males who play passive sexual roles is not entirely consistent with his general position.

<sup>571</sup> Callicles is now thought of as persisting with the indignant tone of 494e7-8.

<sup>572</sup> The passage contains yet more difficulties. If we presume that Ol. had the same text of Plato as we do, apart from the readings to which he has just drawn attention, it seems unlikely that Callicles’ purpose clause at 495a5 could be taken as dependent upon 494e9 (‘am I leading you there?’). But as W. punctuates Callicles would be trying to say ‘You are bringing me to this in order that I shall not agree that pleasure and the good are the same’, making the verb ‘agree’ inappropriate, and the purpose clause either dependent on e9 or unrelated to the actual text of a5-6. Neither would be tolerable. There must be stronger punctuation after the implication that Socrates is doing the leading, which can be explained as a way of indicating that Callicles is now under pressure to agree *with Socrates*. And an independent clause must be found in ταῦτόν ἥδὲ καὶ ἀγαθόν, which seems to relate to 495a6 τὸ αὐτό φημι εἶναι. The easiest way to do this is to supply φημι after ταῦτόν. Ol. would then be interpreting Callicles as saying in this case: ‘So that my account will not be in agreement *with you* in the event that I say they’re different, I claim that they are the same.’

<sup>573</sup> This shows why Ol. has opted for the second reading discussed—the first reading did have Callicles saying what he thought.

30.12. 'Then I'm not doing the right thing' (495b2): 'If I do not seriously put forward what I am saying, I'm not acting honorably either.'

### Lecture 31 (495b3-499b3)<sup>574</sup>

31.1. 'But come, blessed man, consider' (495b3): we reach the *sixth* line of attack, which is of two kinds, one [part] *direct* and the other leading to an *impossibility*. What was Callicles claiming? Two things: that pleasure is the same as the good, and also that wisdom and courage are different from each other and from the good.<sup>575</sup> That he thought wisdom is different from courage is evident from his referring to wisdom earlier and later bringing in courage too.<sup>576</sup> Let me overturn [him], [arguing] that pleasure is not the same as the good, using as a major premise that opposites cannot occur together at the same time in the same thing, and that they do not disappear at the same time. For health and sickness do not disappear at the same time. Now that I have said that, note that pleasure arises as a result of a pain that was there before. If the pain was strong, so will the pleasure be, and if moderate, moderate. That's how we observe that if we are very thirsty, we feel great pleasure when we drink. In the course of drinking, then, both pain and pleasure can be observed. That both can be observed is evident, for if we drag ourselves back prematurely we feel the pain again, whereas if we drink our fill, then, as the saying goes, 'They drank and cured their thirst'.<sup>577</sup>

31.2. Let me put it this way: opposites cannot occur together nor disappear together, pleasure and pain occur together and disappear together, therefore pleasure and pain are not opposites. So if

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<sup>574</sup> In lecture 31 Ol. goes on to what he calls the sixth line of attack, the two arguments against the identity of pleasure and goodness. The treatment is briefer than would nowadays be expected, and the mood didactic. Unusually, Ol. seems committed to finding the same resistance on the part of Socrates to Callicles' refusal to identify wisdom, courage, and good that he finds to the equation of pleasure and good.

<sup>575</sup> Paraphrase of 495d2-5.

<sup>576</sup> Socrates introduces φρόνησις at 489e6; but Callicles introduces bravery with μὴ μόνον φρόνιμοι ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνδρεῖοι, 491b2. The idea that the themes are raised informally earlier and motivate the dialectical move here is an apparently subtle (and rather modern) way of reading the Platonic text., but it is not clear that Callicles draws the distinction as sharply as Ol. intends.

<sup>577</sup> Homer *Il.* 10.2.

pleasure and pain occur together, and pleasure is the same as the good and pain is the same as the bad, as you maintained, then the good and the bad would occur together. This is absurd, for the good is the opposite of the bad. If someone says 'But they are not opposites, for both opposites need to have a distinct form like white and black, but the bad lacks a distinct form,'<sup>578</sup> that would increase even more the absurdity of Callicles' position. For by the same reasoning the bad is a privation. It will never, then, be found alongside its corresponding [positive] attribute,<sup>579</sup> so Callicles is refuted. If someone says 'Why do you say, Socrates, that pleasure and pain occur together? Doesn't pain come first?', reply 'You overlook that it is one thing to say 'occur' and another [to say] 'come first'. For pain does come first, but thereafter they are observed together'.<sup>580</sup>

31.3. Again, if someone raises the question 'What do you mean by saying pleasure is not the opposite of pain? Did you not say that in the *Phaedo*?',<sup>581</sup> reply 'He did not say that there, but took as opposites generation and destruction, the natural and the unnatural, whereas pleasure and pain he did not take as opposites but, rather, as routes to opposites.<sup>582</sup> So they are called opposite qua routes to opposites even though in fact they are not themselves opposites'. Again, if someone says 'what do you mean by saying that opposites cannot occur together in the same thing? And yet there is black and white in grey, and hot and cold occur in lukewarm', reply 'Opposite extremes cannot occur together, but the extremes moderate each other. So in grey and such things the extremes

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<sup>578</sup> Ol. does not need here to remind the pupil that the bad is regularly viewed as the privation of good in Neoplatonism.

<sup>579</sup> Nothing can experience the privation of a property which it still continues to possess, for that would be a matter of possessing and lacking one and the same property.

<sup>580</sup> The verb συνίστασθαι, here translated 'occur', may likewise indicate something's coming into existence or its existing (LSJ IVd).

<sup>581</sup> Cf. *Phd.* 60b5: 'seeming to be opposites'. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that they had seemed to be treated as opposites at *Grg.* 474d ff.

<sup>582</sup> Using *Phlb.* 32b3-4 (note ὁδόν, φθοράν), 53c-55a (note the 'generation and destruction' link), and *Tim.* 64a-65b, where a pleasure is a return to the natural state, and a pain is a deviation from it. W. refers to Proc. *In Tim.* 3.287.16-21, which similarly reproduces the old academic theory of the physiology of pleasure and pain. According to this theory the opposites are the natural state and the state of having deviated therefrom; pleasure and pain are routes to those opposites. However a passage of great influence which does not involve pleasure is *Phd.* 71a-b, which speaks of the pair of processes leading from one of a pair of opposites to the other, for Ol. (*In Phd.* 10.4, 10.10-12) substitutes the term 'routes' (ὁδοί) for Plato's 'processes' (γενέσεις).

have been moderated and the opposites did not remain extreme'.<sup>583</sup> 31.4. So much for that [part of the argument]. Now, let me come to the second [part] and show that wisdom is not different from courage nor are both of these [different] from the good.<sup>584</sup> 'You say that these two are different from each other and from the good. Imagine two men, one courageous and the other a coward, and also in the city enemies who want to kill the citizens. The enemies withdraw. Who is more pleased at their departure, the courageous man or the coward?' Callicles says 'Both about the same, or perhaps the coward more'.

[Socrates] argues syllogistically as follows: 'The coward and the courageous man are, as you say, similarly pleased, those who are similarly pleased are similar with respect to pleasure, those who are similar with respect to pleasure are similar with respect to goodness, those who are similar with respect to goodness are similarly good. But the coward is bad, because cowardice is actually a disease of his, whereas the courageous man is good, therefore the bad man and the good man are similarly good, which is absurd. Furthermore, *qua* coward he is bad, but *qua* having pleasure he is good, therefore the same man is both bad and good, which is absurd.

'On the other hand, if the coward has more pleasure, the absurdity will be still greater. For one who is pleased more will be further towards pleasure, and one who is further towards pleasure is further towards the good, one who is further towards the good is more good, therefore the coward will be more good than the courageous man. But he is also bad *qua* coward. Therefore the bad man is more good than the good man, and one and the same man will be both bad and more good [than the good],<sup>585</sup> which is absurd'. All of this shows that we should cultivate virtue and enjoy

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<sup>583</sup> Cf. Ol. *In Phd.* 10.10, which postulates an infinity of real intermediate positions between opposites.

<sup>584</sup> The argument which follows in fact seems to leave wisdom out of account. It is represented as a *reductio ad absurdum*; a valid *reductio* shows that at least one premise is incorrect. Ol. is assuming that the sharp distinction which Callicles draws between wisdom, courage, and the good is shown to be wrong, but (even assuming that this is a premise) that is only so if the equation of pleasure with the good is accepted: Callicles accepts it, but Socrates and Ol. do not.

<sup>585</sup> There is a possibility that we should read <τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ> here, thus making the absurdity plainer.

the pleasure that comes from it.<sup>586</sup> Thereafter Callicles puts forward [the view] that we should not say of every pleasure that it is good, and Socrates shows what sort of pleasure is good and what sort is bad.

31.5. **'All right, then, let's remember'** (495d2-3): because he knew his changeability, he resumes and asks him if he wants to agree.

31.6. **'Nor Callicles either, I think'** (495e1): Socrates says 'Nor do you, Callicles, agree with this. For if you realize who you really are,<sup>587</sup> and have recourse to common notions, you will abandon this opinion'.

31.7. **'I'm talking about hunger itself'** (496c7): 'hunger itself' is well said, for hunger is to be examined as hunger.<sup>588</sup> For if someone is hungry because he is about to eat luxuriously, perhaps sea-perch or a dish of mince-meat and the like, this 'hunger' would not be painful for him.

31.8. **'Then do you see what follows'** (496e4-5): note that the master too speaks before Aristotle of 'what follows' in a syllogism.<sup>589</sup>

31.9. **'In soul or body'** (496e7-8): [thirst] does not concern the body alone (for that is lifeless) nor the soul [alone] (for that is bodiless) but the combination. So he says 'Now is not the time to inquire which it belongs to'.

31.10. **'But you're acting soft [playing Acco]'**<sup>590</sup> (497a7): Acco was a stupid and foolish woman. So Socrates says 'You understand what I say, but you play Acco', meaning 'You make a pretence of foolishness and ignorance'.

31.11. **'No, no, Callicles'** (497b4): Gorgias, wanting to obtain benefit,<sup>591</sup> and also to have Callicles refuted so that he is not the only

<sup>586</sup> Ol. in fact concludes that two premises of this *reductio* are false: the good is *not* pleasure, and the good is wisdom and courage (i.e. virtue). But this is not so much a formal conclusion to an argument as an inference revealing a moral lesson. For the superior kind of pleasure cf. 3.13, 9.7, 25.1, 26.15.

<sup>587</sup> The Delphic call for self-knowledge is interpreted again with an eye on *Alcibiades* 1, 129a-130d (cf. 0.9, 38.1).

<sup>588</sup> I.e. *qua* hunger for any food, not for some particular food. We call the latter 'having an appetite'.

<sup>589</sup> Another case of Ol.'s insistence on Plato having anticipated facets of Aristotelian logic, cf. 3.7, 22.3, 43.8, and tacitly at 16.3.

<sup>590</sup> Ol. interprets the verb as a typical *-ίζουμαι* compound, based on a proper name. A fuller account is given in the scholia (106.3-10 Carbonara Naddei), which make reference to the comedies of Hermippus and Amphis.

<sup>591</sup> Perhaps recalling 505c3 where Callicles' lack of cooperation is interpreted by Socrates as a refusal to be benefited.

one to be refuted, begs Callicles 'Don't stop but stay, so that we can know what he concludes'. However, Callicles says 'Socrates is forever asking these petty trifling questions'. Gorgias asks again 'What does it matter to you? For it is not your honour that is at stake here. Whether he raises good or bad questions is irrelevant to you'.

### Lecture 32 (499b4-501c8)<sup>592</sup>

32.1. 'I've been listening to you for a long time' (499b4): note that in the preceding sections it has been demonstrated that not all pleasure is good, although it had been Callicles' view that all pleasure is good. So Callicles has been affected to some extent by Socrates' arguments, but he does not take it with a good grace, but says 'It was in play<sup>593</sup> that I said all pleasure is good. For who does not know that some pleasures are good while others are bad?' So since this is the case, and some [pleasures] are good and some are bad, we must search for the craft that has the power to separate good pleasure from bad.<sup>594</sup> Let us therefore examine how other crafts make separations, and in that way we shall discover [what applies in] this case too. Carpentry possesses a tool for separating off the curved from the straight, and in the same way too house-building possesses a tool by the use of which it orders and arranges its work. So here too there is a need for instruments to separate the pleasure that is good from the pleasure that is not good. These [instruments] are two: *arrangement* and *order*. Arrangement belongs to justice, and order belongs to temperance.<sup>595</sup> Hence it is through justice and temperance that we shall discern them.

32.2. The aim in what follows is to teach what is constitutional well-being.<sup>596</sup> Then when Callicles refers to these four men,

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<sup>592</sup> In lecture 32 Ol. makes the transition to the more openly political part of *Grg.* even before Plato does, bringing in the four great Athenian statesmen of the fifth century already. Following Ammonius, who was aware that present doctrine was based on *Rep.* 4, he struggles to establish the notion of the intermediate orator when everything in the text being commented on points to a dichotomy (based on the distinction between pleasure and good), not a trichotomy.

<sup>593</sup> Interpreting the conditional clause with indefinite subject at 499b5 as applying to the present case.

<sup>594</sup> Ol. is here playing on the dual meaning of διακρίνω as (physically) 'separate' and (intellectually) 'distinguish'. Hence the virtues are discerning.

<sup>595</sup> This is explained more fully at 34.2.

<sup>596</sup> This shows clearly that the passage of *Grg.* in which Ol. finds clear reference to his constitutional well-being (and virtues) is the discussion of

Pericles, Themistocles, Miltiades and Cimon, and asks 'Well, are they not statesmen?' [Socrates] says no, and explains his view well, while Aristides scores empty points against imaginary claims and repeats at great length about them what Plato himself had already said.<sup>597</sup> And certainly one of the commentators<sup>598</sup> well observed that what Plato had said well about them Aristides made a mystery of by going to great lengths. For Plato too says that they saved the city, but he says they were not statesmen, and he offers medicine as a model.

The philosopher Ammonius says 'taking my starting-points from the fourth book of the *Republic*<sup>599</sup> I hope to clarify this teaching'. It is as follows: understand that *medicine is threefold*, false medicine, true [medicine] and the intermediate kind. *False [medicine]* is the kind that aims at flattery and amplifies the desire of the patient, and if he by chance says 'I want to eat honeyed milk', the doctor, even if it causes him harm, says 'Yes master, eat it', especially if he is going to dine with him. *True [medicine]* is the kind that gives orders and spares no-one, but whether directed at rulers or kings criticizes them, saying 'If you do not do what I have prescribed, I

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temperance and justice which is approaching (504d ff.).

<sup>597</sup> This is a general reference to Aristides *Or.* 46D = 3Behr.

<sup>598</sup> Lenz, (1946) 120, assumes that this is a commentator on Aristides, and Behr (1968) that it is Porphyry in the *Against Aristides*, but it could also be a rare reference to earlier commentary on *Grg.* Though the practice of not identifying earlier commentators seems strange, it had also been followed in some commentaries of Proclus, perhaps before that. See Dillon (1987), xxxiv ff., Tarrant (1993), 148-9.

<sup>599</sup> This is an important precedent for the use of *Rep.* for the interpretation of *Grg.*, and shows how deeply the debt to *Rep.*, particularly book 4, goes. W. refers to 425c-427a, and though the parallel is not close he is clearly correct. The doctor's problems with troublesome patients (426a) is used as a point of comparison for the statesman's problems with recalcitrant citizens (b-c); and, more important, we meet quite clearly the distinction between those who flatter the badly-constituted city (c2-8), and the more sympathetically treated individuals who actually try to serve the state properly and keep passing laws for its improvement, but are frustrated by the unsuitable nature of its constitution to start with (d1-e8). Again these persons are not true statesmen even though sometimes fooled into believing as much (d4-6). So here we find the Platonic prototype of Ol.'s intermediate orators. The tripartition of oratory goes back further in the Alexandrian tradition than Ammonius, for it is found already in Hermeias, 221.9-24. It should be observed that Behr (1968), 188, wants to emend the text so that Ammonius is simply reporting Porphyry. He is misled by the characteristic plural reference to *Rep.*, and wishes to see a reference to the fourth constitution! The medical material is also a good argument for the importance of Ammonius.

shall no longer see you [as a patient]'.<sup>600</sup> The *intermediate* kind [of medicine] does not aim at flattery, but knows what is beneficial. Yet it does not aim at truth either, but remains silent for the sake of money or some other gain, and does not rear up in opposition excessively, but having once enunciated what is beneficial, thereafter returns [meekly] to ground. Doubtless if [the patient] should encounter distress later, [the intermediate doctor] says 'What? Didn't I tell you not to do that?'.

32.3. In the same way *rhetoric* is threefold: the *false kind*, which aims at flattery, as when it says 'What do you want? what shall I propose? what gratification shall I give you?';<sup>601</sup> the *true kind*, which is the servant of statesmanship, and the *intermediate kind*, which turns away from flatterers—Demosthenes was also an example of this, for he attacks the flatterers<sup>602</sup>—but which does not, however, aim at truth.<sup>603</sup>

These four [democratic statesmen] were of this intermediate kind. For they saved the citizens, but they did not gratify them with true salvation and well-being. They resembled apothecaries,<sup>604</sup> for just as they stock herbs and other aids, but do not know how to use them and attend the doctors, so too these four were servants, preserving public safety, but ignorant of how to lead the way to the good and save their souls. If someone asks 'Well? Did they act badly in saving them? Surely there was a need of preservation, so that by being preserved they should be benefited; what's not living cannot be benefited, only what's kept alive.', reply 'There was a need for the preservation of their bodies, but not of this alone, but a prior need for real preservation, that of their souls'. That they did nothing good you can see from their being in a democracy and never having created an aristocracy.

32.4. If we lack the power to moderate the subjects, we must retreat and not remain with them. Those who remain suffer a fate

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<sup>600</sup> Note the parallel with the true politician who cannot change the democratic regime which confronts him and so must withdraw from public life, 32.4, 41.2.

<sup>601</sup> Dem. 3.22; cf. 0.3, 1.13, 12.4.

<sup>602</sup> Note that Demosthenes was himself accused of being a flatterer in one sense at 12.4.

<sup>603</sup> Observe the three-fold division of rhetoric now operating: true rhetoric serves true statesmanship; intermediate rhetoric = the status of Demosthenes and the four; flattery/false rhetoric = that of Aeschines or Callicles (see 0.3, 1.13).

<sup>604</sup> See below, 32.4 and note.



similar to those who cast themselves into the midst of many terrible wild beasts and wish to stroke them.<sup>605</sup> This is what he is going to say in the sections that follow.

**'I've been listening to you for a long time, Socrates'** (499b4): as I have already said, because Callicles says 'I conceded these points only in play, for I know that that some pleasures are good, and others are bad', Socrates says 'Very well, but now play no longer, but seek the craft that distinguishes the good from pleasure, and let us establish whether these four men were really statesmen'. For they will turn out manifestly not to be statesmen, but servants and promoters of desire. Since the orators protest at these terms, let us say what they are. Note that they are called servants because they resemble apothecaries. Just as apothecaries attend doctors, so too these men were servants of statesmen, without themselves being statesmen.<sup>606</sup> For how could they have been statesmen who lived under a democracy, a disorderly constitutional system which has rulers who are chosen by lot and at random instead of upright men, and not under an aristocracy, in which Plato urges rulers to be educated in literature and gymnastics and mathematics, so that they lack personal interests but secure sustenance from the subjects of their aristocratic rule, and so that the rulers call the ruled 'sustainers' and the ruled call the rulers 'preservers'?<sup>607</sup> Since they are the best and preserve the city, they resemble God, and it would not be unjust, although they are godlike, for them to descend to the affairs of the city. For the city was what makes them thus, and they must repay the cost of their upbringing to the city.<sup>608</sup> That is the reason [the orators] were called servants.

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<sup>605</sup> Whether or not Ol. is still influenced by Ammonius here, note Ol.'s characteristic solution to one's inability to convert a democracy into an aristocracy: withdrawal from public life lest one suffer the fate of a human in a place full of wild animals. The notion of withdrawal and the comparison come from *Rep.* 6 496a-d, also influential at 41.2, 45.2, cf. 26.18.

<sup>606</sup> The distinction between doctors and apothecaries (cf. 1.13, 32.3, 42.1) is modelled on that between doctors and servants of doctors in *Laws* 4 720a, itself a passage with close connexions with *Grg.* since it contrasts a medicine which gives reasons and understands with apprentice-medicine which gives no reasons and is acquired by empirical observation when carrying out the doctor's orders. The passage likewise influences Ol.'s conception of the empirical doctor at 12.2. Changes in the nature of the medical profession have meant that Plato's assistant doctor, who deals mainly with slaves, has had to be replaced by the drug-seller.

<sup>607</sup> While material here is drawn from books 2-3, 5, and 7 of the *Republic*, the modes of address come from 5 463ab.

<sup>608</sup> *Rep.* 7 520ab.

32.5. Furthermore, when we say they are promoters of desire, we do not mean base desire but merely bodily [desire]. For just as weavers and cobblers claim to fulfil desire, not base desire, but desire that is necessary (for we need clothing and footwear), yet nevertheless [desire] of the body and not of the soul, so too these men saved the city in warfare and met the needs of bodily desire, but nowhere was there benefit for the soul. They resemble intermediate medicine: for the true statesman never aims at pleasure but always speaks the truth, even if it is painful, and never hides what's painful, whereas these men sometimes said what was painful, but at other times did not. For Demosthenes says 'Is Philip dead?—No, by Zeus, just sick',<sup>609</sup> and for this reason he gave pain to the Athenians as he led them towards the good. But again there were clearly many other occasions on which he did not give them pain. For this reason then we say that [the democratic leaders] were not statesmen but servants and promoters of desire. For we must not only be concerned for our bodies, but especially for soul, because well-being belongs to the soul, not the body. Hence we must at all times embrace the good.

That is what Plato says. And Aristotle in the *Ethics* says that one kind of well-being is common, and one kind is unique and choice-worthy.<sup>610</sup> The kind that is common also belongs to the other animals, for example [the well-being that consists in] health and strength and suchlike, but the choiceworthy kind belongs to humans alone, and involves rational calculation, by which we differ from the irrational animals. This is [the well-being that] aims at the good. It is the one therefore that the statesman needs to possess, so as to produce an aristocracy and not to remain in a democracy.

32.6. **'You treat me like a child'** (499b9-c1): 'for children are accustomed to play. You must not approach me in that fashion'.

32.7. **'Make the best of what I have', as the old saying goes'** (499c4-5): there is a saying, 'Do the best with what you have'. By this is meant 'Put into order what fortune has granted you'. The saying is particularly common among dice-players. For if a winning number falls, and if the dice-player were an expert, then his

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<sup>609</sup> Dem. 4.10.

<sup>610</sup> W. cites *EN* 10.8 (1178b20-32) and *EE* 1.7 (1217a18-29), both passages which deny that the term 'happy' can apply to animals, and thus fail to justify Ol's claim.

victory would be glorious. But if fortune provides the right [numbers], while the person who receives them is not an expert and does not know how to use them, then nothing good comes of it.<sup>611</sup>

32.8. **'And that for the sake of it we should do all the other things'** (499e9): note that the good is not for the sake of something, but is that for the sake of which. For the road that leads to the end is for the sake of something, but the end itself is that for the sake of which. So the good is that for the sake of which.

32.9. **'Do you cast a third vote with ours?'** (500a1-2): he groups Gorgias and Polus together as one, since the contest with them has been concluded. So there is Gorgias and Polus [regarded] as one, there is Callicles and there is Socrates. Observe the three.

32.10. **'Now is it for anyone'** (500a4): he says this, because Polus said that it belongs to everyone to know what things are good and what are pleasant.<sup>612</sup> So he says 'Is it for anyone to select, or does it need a craft?'

32.11. **'And for the sake of the God of friendship, Callicles'** (500b5-6): [Socrates] refers him to the overseer of friendship, so that realising that God is the patron of friendship he will no longer play. For one who plays with a friend plays with God, the patron of [friendship].<sup>613</sup>

32.12. **'Nor again take what I say that way, as making jokes'** (500b7-c1): for we must not, as he says, 'treat serious matters with laughter', especially now, where we need to inquire into how our life is to be lived, whether we should really [base it] on pleasure or not.<sup>614</sup>

32.13. **'Doing what a real man does'** (500c4-5): this refers to Callicles' earlier statement, 'We must do what Gorgias recommends'.<sup>615</sup> So Socrates says 'We must understand the life that we ought to follow, whether it is the one this man recommends or the one that philosophy promotes'. His phrase 'what a real man does' conveys a great ironical force through the word 'real'.<sup>616</sup>

<sup>611</sup> Presumably an illustration of contemporary dicing. See also 4.8.

<sup>612</sup> Seemingly a reference to 473e.

<sup>613</sup> An excellent example of Ol.'s theological caution. He can talk of one of the traditional functions of Zeus without mentioning the name, hence causing no offence to Christians.

<sup>614</sup> Ol. has quoted from Isocrates, 1.31.

<sup>615</sup> A paraphrase of Callicles' grand speech (482c-486d), notably 485e-486a, where, however, Gorgias is not mentioned.

<sup>616</sup> A rare case of Ol. not being blind to Socrates' use of irony, 28.5. The word translated 'real' is just *ῥῆ*.

32.14. **'To divide these lives....when we've divided them'** (500d1): note that some things have more than one name, but are one thing, such as 'endowed with speech' and 'mortal' and 'man', and generally with multiply-named things. So [Socrates] says we must first distinguish the names and see whether they are the same or different [in reference], and only then inquire into the matter in hand.<sup>617</sup> Note that statesman, aristocrat, and king are the same.

32.15. **'Making practically no distinctions'** (501a6): that is 'demarcations'. [The word translated] 'making distinctions' comes from number, because numbers too are demarcated one from another. The medicine that aims at pleasure strives simply to be pleasing, e.g. for how this patient may be pleased with his broth, since it does not care whether it causes harm or not.

32.16. **'No I don't. I'm going along with you'** (501c7): 'I agree with what you say, so please draw whatever conclusion you wish'.

### Lecture 33 (501d1-503d4)<sup>618</sup>

33.1. **'Is this so for one soul'** (501d1): I have already said that we require crafts to distinguish the good from pleasure. So Socrates asks Callicles 'What sort of crafts aim at pleasure, and what sort aim at the good?'. He begins with those that aim at pleasure, and of these he starts with flute-playing, since it is far removed from reasoning.<sup>619</sup> We call it 'far from reasoning', because, first, it does

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<sup>617</sup> Plato is taking the rhetorical and philosophic lives and asking (i) whether they differ in anything more than the name, and, in the event of their being different, (ii.a) the nature of this difference and (ii.b) which is to be chosen. Ol. rightly takes (ii.a) and (ii.b) together (note τε ... καί), as being pertinent to constitutional well-being. He detects in Socrates' remarks here a preferred manner of philosophic investigation applicable to other topics, and is partly justified by the ease with which Socrates regards some apparently very different terms as having the same referent. He supplies an example relevant to his own interpretation of this dialogue.

<sup>618</sup> In lecture 33 Ol. deals with the comparison of demagogic oratory to music and drama. There is again considerable anticipation of what Plato will say later about the Four great orators.

<sup>619</sup> The *aulos* in fact resembles a primitive oboe. The following reason for despising *aulos*-playing occurs in *In Alc.* 66.9-10. Arist. *Pol.* 1391a24-28 testifies to early prejudice against the *aulos* because it prevents the use of *logos qua* 'words' (not *qua* 'reason'). Ol. seems to be considering it as a hindrance to *all* kinds of *logos* in his comments on *Phd.* 64b3-4. His prejudice against the instrument itself appears to be of irrational intensity, but may be connected with its use in orgiastic religion and with the low status of the *auletris* (flute-girl).

not use words, unlike playing the lyre. This latter [craft] can strike the strings with the fingers and also sing a tune, whereas the former, which presses the mouth down upon the flute, utters no words.

Secondly, we call it 'far from reasoning' because flute-playing can also elicit a response from irrational animals, while lyre-playing<sup>620</sup> does not—it charms only rational creatures. So [Socrates] says that [flute-playing] aims at pleasure, and likewise lyre-playing and poetry-recital. We should understand that the recital of poetry amounts to rabble-rousing: as Isocrates also says,<sup>621</sup> take the metre and the rhythm out of poetry and you are left with rabble-rousing, the rhetoric employed by demagogues. I call orators 'demagogues', when they lead the people where they like.<sup>622</sup> But some rhetoric is instructive, the craft whereby these sophists of ours teach,<sup>623</sup> and some is practical, such as that of the writers of speeches for the courts.<sup>624</sup>

33.2. [Socrates] declares that these crafts have either particular or universal application, and are used either on men alone or on women also, and either on masters alone or also on slaves. Flute-playing is applied to men and also to women, to many persons and also to an individual, to slaves and also to free men. But rabble-rousing is applied to men only, as women are not found at a public gathering. And it is not a matter of distinguishing what is good from what is pleasant for a single soul, but for a plurality.

Socrates therefore says 'There is no individual in pursuit of the good in the city', but Callicles says 'Indeed there is, there have been these four men'. And Callicles begins to enumerate them,

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<sup>620</sup> *Cithara*-playing to be exact, though neither Plato nor Ol. is likely to have treated other similar stringed instruments differently. Note that in *Grg.* no distinction is made between the status of *aulos*-playing and *cithara*-playing, but that *Rep.* 3 399d–e judges stringed instruments to be superior.

<sup>621</sup> Isocr. 9.10–11: in 11 Isocrates does not say anything specific here about demagoguery, only that the reputation of poets would be considerably less high but for their use of metre; but in 10 his use of the verb *ψυχαγωγεῖν* for what the poets can do *even without* good language and argument may have suggested that the poet's aim is to *δημαγωγεῖν*.

<sup>622</sup> A demagogue is literally a 'people-leader'.

<sup>623</sup> The sophists of the Roman Empire had made considerable use of set speeches by which to convey their ideas, often delivering them in public theatres before large audiences. Instructive oratory is also contrasted with demagogic oratory at 45.1.

<sup>624</sup> Taking these two types of rhetoric as ones which do not fall under the heading of rabble-rousing. The latter is mentioned at 45.1.

beginning with Themistocles who gave many gifts to the city and built the wooden wall,<sup>625</sup> and ending with Pericles, an acquaintance of Socrates—for Socrates remembered Pericles—he had not experienced Themistocles, but he had experienced Pericles.<sup>626</sup> Socrates does not, however, employ this order, but begins with Pericles,<sup>627</sup> so that after his less weighty criticisms he might finish with his more serious ones. For they accused Pericles of 'theft'<sup>628</sup>—observe how insubstantial the accusation was!—whereas they ostracized Cimon,<sup>629</sup> and they tried to arrest Themistocles when the Spartans charged him for complicity with the Persians along with Pausanias.<sup>630</sup> But when they were not able to do that, Themistocles went into exile to the Persian king's court and did away with himself using bull's blood—hence the comic poet says 'Themistocles' death was preferable'.<sup>631</sup> [Socrates] ended with Miltiades because he underwent a more grievous punishment, for they delivered him into extreme conditions of imprisonment,<sup>632</sup> so that he should die as a prisoner.

33.3. Socrates says that they were not true statesmen for the following reason—because the people mistreated them. Hence they were servants, for they served the people, and provided for their desires, though not for base desires. For there is also a fine kind of desire. Surely that is how the sick man desires health: for we desire what is not there at the moment. And if someone asks

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<sup>625</sup> The Delphic oracle had referred to the need for a wooden wall to repel the Persians (Herodotus 7.141), and Themistocles among others took this to refer to a wall of ships (142-3), thus finding the strategy which was to win the Athenians victory at Salamis.

<sup>626</sup> A reference to *Grg.* 455e4-6. Ol. is not drawing on any additional historical knowledge or he would have mentioned Miltiades and Cimon in this context.

<sup>627</sup> At 515d-6e.

<sup>628</sup> Cf. *Grg.* 516a. In fact this was an accusation of embezzlement of public funds; it is referred to by Plutarch *Pericles* 32; Pericles was fined only.

<sup>629</sup> Cf. *Grg.* 516d; they ostracized Cimon in 461 B.C. In fact the disgrace of Cimon was probably short-lived, and involved no suggestion of misdeemeanour.

<sup>630</sup> *Grg.* 516d mentions also an ostracism of Themistocles (471?) earlier than his exile.

<sup>631</sup> Ar. *Knights* 84.

<sup>632</sup> *Grg.* 516de speaks of a vote to throw Miltiades into the pit, a sentence usually reserved for an enemy of the people; the sentence was not in fact carried out even according to Plato, who has 'selected his details in such a way as to put the conduct of the Athenians in the worst possible light' (Dodds).

'How is it then that healthy people desire health, even though they have it?', reply that they desire that it should remain and not go into retreat.<sup>633</sup> So Socrates says that they were not true orators, nor of the flattering kind, but of the intermediate kind. Remember that he nowhere calls them flatterers—on the contrary he states that they were not flatterers.<sup>634</sup> So those who have maintained that Plato dismissed them as flatterers are wrongfully accusing him.

Note that Plato banished tragedy and comedy from his constitution.<sup>635</sup> It is obvious why he banished comedy, since it uses old wives' tales,<sup>636</sup> but he dismissed tragedy because it draws out our emotions and builds up the passion of grief within us.<sup>637</sup> Those who want to introduce tragedy justify its introduction, firstly because it imitates heroic ideals, and secondly because it does not allow our emotions to remain seething within us, but draws them out and gets rid of them.<sup>638</sup> Because they team with grief, it has been claimed that if the spectators do not cry, nothing has been achieved.<sup>639</sup>

It is worthwhile reflecting why it is that Plato here (502bc) says that tragedy promotes pleasure—yet it generates grief, as I have said. We maintain that there is pleasure even in grief. That is why if women are lamenting the loss of their children, they are pained if somebody prevents them, and so they take pleasure in their lament.<sup>640</sup> Hence tragedy creates grief, but because the spectators

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<sup>633</sup> Ol. is influenced by the doctrine of *Symp.* 201b-206a.

<sup>634</sup> 517a5-6: Plato seems to be suggesting that the Four did not even succeed in flattery, while Ol. takes him to mean that they were above flattery. This is in response to the criticism of Aristides *Or.* 46 351.9-355.22D (3.513-32Behr), cf. 41.18 below. On Ol.'s stance here see Tarrant (1997a).

<sup>635</sup> See above, 0.1 with note. Also Ničev, 1978, particularly in relation to ideas of catharsis.

<sup>636</sup> A peculiar reason for Ol. to have offered, given Socrates' fear that the final myth of *Grg.* will look like an old-wife's tale (527a5); one might have expected a mention of the unseemliness of comedy (imitating traits which should not be imitated, *Rep.* 395e-396a), or of the unseemliness of the emotions that it encourages in us (there is ample material at *Phlb.* 48a-50b). Ol. is of course reflecting his own age's opinion of the fairy-tale material of the plots of Old Comedy.

<sup>637</sup> See *Rep.* 10 603c ff.

<sup>638</sup> Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1449b24-28.

<sup>639</sup> W. remarks 'num fragm. com.?', as the quotation consists of two lines in the same metre, two spondee followed by three iambi, but it is not clear what Ol. refers to.

<sup>640</sup> As spelled out here, this seems a poor example from the point of view of Platonic philosophy, which does not recognize the relief from pain (offered by lamentation in this case) as a true pleasure (*Phlb.* 43c-e, *Rep.* 583c-

take pleasure in this very act of grieving, [Plato] maintains that tragedy promotes pleasure.<sup>641</sup>

33.4. **'Before large audiences'** (501e5-6): for if [lyre-playing] that is welcomed at competitions and seems to do some good aims merely at pleasure, so much the more is it welcomed for the sake of pleasure when outside competitions.

33.5. **'Cinesias the son of Meles'** (501e10): he was the author of lyrics that aimed at pleasure. But his father not only did not aim at pleasure, but even caused grief, because he lacked skill and was displeasing to the audience.<sup>642</sup>

33.6. **'That's all right'** (503a5): Socrates accepts that Callicles does not believe rhetoric to be of a single kind. For he says that there are some orators who help, while some do harm. So Socrates says 'It's sufficient that you've given general agreement. For this is what I too want to demonstrate'.

33.7. **'Yes, Callicles'** (503c4): Socrates says 'If virtue is to fulfil the desires, as you were claiming before, these people have in fact been living according to virtue. But if, as you now grant, not all pleasure is good, I no longer agree that these men were good. Just tell me, were these people in charge of affairs or not? For if they were in charge, they ought to have protected the citizens well and led them as they wanted. But if they were not in charge, it's clear that they were ruled by the people, and in being ruled they served them, and so were servants'.<sup>643</sup>

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584a), yet the example of lamentation is briefly touched on at *Phlb.* 48a1.

<sup>641</sup> Plato gives a full account of why comedy involves a mixture of pleasure and pain at *Phlb.* 48a ff., but the mixture of pleasure and tears caused by tragedy is only briefly treated there (48a5-6). Since that dialogue should have been extremely important for 33.3, one may gather from the lack of reference or obvious allusion to it that Ol. is comparatively unfamiliar with this work—in fact direct reference or allusion to all works later in the curriculum than *Phd.* (other than *Phdr.*) is rare in this commentary.

<sup>642</sup> Cinesias is the dithyrambic poet referred to frequently by Aristophanes, often regarded as a corrupting influence; Meles was described by Pherecrates in *Savages* (PCG fr. 6) as the worst citharode ever.

<sup>643</sup> Ol.'s précis seems to go well beyond the text as it has come down to us, but that text becomes problematic at d1-3, and there is a distinct possibility that something is missing.



**Lecture 34 (503d5-506c4)<sup>644</sup>**

34.1. ‘Then let’s see, considering calmly’ (503d5): Socrates defined the crafts that distinguish the good and the pleasant, and showed the proper task of the statesman. Callicles said that these four men were statesmen, and Socrates said they were not. It is worth inquiring, then, whether they had been genuine statesmen or not. Socrates says ‘let us consider calmly’, that is to say quietly and without disturbance. For disturbance and disorder tend to be the cause of many evils.

Next Socrates begins with the universal and proceeds to the particular. For he says ‘All men are good who are concerned for the order and arrangement of the soul’, and he confirms this with reference to particular examples. And some think that he is using induction, but this is not so.<sup>645</sup> He is instead confirming his universal statement, just as when we say ‘Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other’, and we then confirm it by particular examples, namely ‘For if to 10 and 10 you add 5 and 5, you make the things <equal to the same total> equal themselves’.<sup>646</sup> Hence here too Socrates’ universal statement is confirmed by his particular examples, and in this case it’s chiefly for Callicles, because we believe when we hear the universal, whereas we are not convinced by the particulars. For example when we state that ‘Every good pleasure is fine’ we are satisfied, but not in particular cases, such as ‘Committing injustice is bad’. That’s why Callicles does not accept the condemnation of intemperance.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>644</sup> In lecture 34 Ol. is at first concerned to counter the claim that Socrates founds his defence of temperance on an induction at 503e (presumably because inductions are not binding, and 508e-509a suggests that the argument *is* binding); he then goes on to explain the appropriateness of Socrates’ taking over both roles in the argument at 506c.

<sup>645</sup> There appears to be a hidden agenda behind Ol.’s denial that Plato wants to establish the universal case. The natural notions are such as to make the universal intrinsically more knowable and often more familiar than the particular.

<sup>646</sup> Reading τὰ τῷ αὐτῷ ἴσα αὐτὰ ἴσα for τὰ αὐτὰ ἴσα. Two separate additions of 10 and 5 will both equal 15: they will also be equal to each other. The text appears to be giving common notion 2 from book I of Euclid’s *Elements*, but in support of common notion 1. Has the recorder missed something, or is Ol. regarding #2 as a special case of #1?

<sup>647</sup> The argument appears very condensed. If all good pleasures are fine, it follows that all not-fine pleasures are not good. Hence, if injustice is a pleasure, and injustice is base, then injustice is not good. Similarly, if

34.2. So Socrates confirms his claim from particular cases: and these are three, *pictures*, *plans*, and the *soul itself*. Two of these, pictures and plans, he takes up [as illustrations of] the inanimate, and the other one [to illustrate] the animate.<sup>648</sup> He says 'Painters who produce pictures care for both order and arrangement, and builders who make lifeless plans bring order to houses and such things. If these crafts dealing with the inanimate care for order and arrangement, then all the more do those concerned with souls. Temperance is the *order* of the soul, for order is submitting the inferior to the superior, that is desire to reason. Justice is its *arrangement*, for it belongs to arrangement to distribute to each according to its worth'.<sup>649</sup>

Then Socrates asks Callicles 'Tell me, what is the goal of the doctor, and the goal of the gymnastic-trainer?' Callicles says 'Health in the first case, and good physical condition in the other'. 'Tell me, then, what is the goal of the craft dealing with the soul? He wants to hear that [it is] 'temperance and justice', but Callicles, either because he does not know or because he knows but conceals it, makes no reply, but abandons the conversation and says 'Speak on if you wish, for it does not matter to me'.

So Socrates, on completing this discussion, since Callicles refuses to converse, examines the argument by himself and reveals the aim of the dialogue and speaks about the creative and formal causes of constitutional well-being.<sup>650</sup> And the way in which he does this, examining it by himself, is quite reasonable.

34.3. For we should first prevail over the many-headed beasts,<sup>651</sup> i.e. shut up the passions, and then proceed by oneself on this basis.

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intemperance is a base pleasure, it is not good.

<sup>648</sup> The comparison between production of order in inanimate things and in the soul is prominent between 504a3 and 505b12. Plato actually uses more physical examples.

<sup>649</sup> Cf. 32.1. Here Ol. infers from 504d1-3 that justice is being connected with lawfulness, and lawfulness with the arrangement of the soul. Ol. has inherited from Plato the problems of having a concept of temperance rather too close to that of justice for one to be able to make sharp distinctions. The theory used here is based on the definitions of temperance and justice in *Republic* IV, 442c-444a.

<sup>650</sup> That is to say he speaks about the philosophic life and about justice and temperance (0.5). Note the convenient if un compelling occurrence of the term *σκοπός* at 507d6, and the following statement that justice and temperance must be present in one who is to become blessed.

<sup>651</sup> *Rep.* 588c, referring to the multifarious desires. The term 'beasts' is absent from the MS, and supplied by Jahn (1848), perhaps unnecessarily.

Hence having prevailed over Polus and Callicles, he then investigates the truth by himself and says 'I am going to show you by myself, but nonetheless, if I speak badly, you who are present should not excuse me but should refute me'. This is appropriate for all, for we should not simply put our trust in Socrates but in the truth. This is what he does in the *Phaedo* (91c) when he says 'Do not be concerned even a little about Socrates, but be greatly concerned about the truth, and inquire whether the soul is truly immortal'.

And now he urges everyone to pull him up if he speaks badly. For he says 'I do not speak as one who knows at all'. It is worth debating why he says 'I do not speak with knowledge.' What? Is Socrates ignorant?<sup>652</sup> We say, first, that he teaches modesty of character and that we should not praise ourselves. Second, that there are many degrees of cognition, as also of truth. How is it that there many degrees of cognition? We must say that cognition by means of sensation is different from cognition by means of opinion (for the former is of particulars, while the latter is of universals), and different again is intellective, i.e. divine, cognition. It is this last that Socrates says he does not know. For who possesses cognition in the way that Intellect itself does? Hence, he invites criticism and calls a man who helps him his benefactor, since there is nothing greater than the truth.

34.4. [Socrates] then says 'Do you want me to proceed with the argument, so that the story has a head on it, or not?' The head of a story is the moral. For he is talking about the actual truth that is hidden in the myth, which poetic [myths] must also possess, so that we should not be led astray at the very point when we are getting to learn the truth. So we should not leave the argument without a head.<sup>653</sup>

Now Gorgias, pleased at this, asks Socrates to explain, and says 'Everyone is listening to you, even Callicles'. Socrates then says 'I wanted Callicles to continue so that I could speak in response to him, as Amphion did to Zethus'. He says this because Callicles in the preceding section had cited iambic verses from the *Antiope* and

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<sup>652</sup> On this theme W. compares *In Alc.* 172.1-14; there is no sign here of awareness of Socrates' strong claims of ignorance in the *Theaetetus* (150b-d). Ol. may be taking note of Socrates' distinction between divine and human knowledge which recurs in the *Apology*.

<sup>653</sup> For the 'moral' or ἐπιμύθιον see 49.3, *Prol.* 7.28-32.

said 'Zethus the soldier said to Amphion his brother, who was a lyre-player, "you are playing the lyre to no purpose, benefiting no one, so get out and lead the military life, get rich and become a tyrant." You, too, Socrates—why do you philosophize? You should rather enrich yourself and be grasping'. 'Just as Amphion reproved his brother, so I too wanted to speak against Callicles about these things'. But since Gorgias had asked him, Socrates speaks by himself.

34.5. **'About our bodies'** (504b2): he argues from the inferior [to the superior], to the effect that, if the body needs order and arrangement, all the more does the soul, being more divine.

34.6. **'Then what's the name [for what comes to be] in the body'** (504b7): you must understand this as an elliptical expression: 'What is the name for the arrangement and order that comes to be in bodies?' He does not mean the name of body, but of its arrangement and order.

34.7. **'And when he takes away'** (504d8): for if someone wrongs someone and takes away his property, the statesman repossesses it by force.

34.8. **'Yes, for what's the benefit'** (504e6): Callicles has agreed, but Socrates argues on regardless and says 'What is the benefit of looking after the body and not allowing it to become disordered, but, imposing a diet and emptying it when full of infection, while not purifying and calming the soul that is filled up with evil beliefs?'

34.9. **'The doctors mostly allow a healthy man'** (505a7-8): it is worth inquiring why he said that doctors allow a healthy man to eat as much as he likes. What? If he is being intemperate and desires more, should we give it to him? We say, first, that he said 'being healthy', and if he is intemperate he is not healthy, for his very intemperance is a form of sickness. Second, he himself resolved the puzzle by adding 'mostly'.

34.10. **'I don't know what you're saying'** (505c1): he was indignant at being accused of intemperance.

34.11. **'This man won't abide'** (505c3): from now on he deals with him severely.<sup>654</sup>

34.12. **'That's up to you'** (505c9): i.e., 'Do whatever you want, for I do not care'.

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<sup>654</sup> A comment perhaps suggested by Callicles' ὡς βίαιος εἶ, 505d4.

34.13. **'Then Epicharmus' words will be true for me'** (505e1): Epicharmus was a comic writer and introduced two characters in discussion with one another with one of the two subsequently going over what the two of them had said.<sup>655</sup>

34.14. **'Well, I don't think we ought to leave yet, Socrates'** (506a8): Gorgias invites him to finish his speech.

34.15. **'I won't be annoyed with you'** (506c1-2): observe Socrates' moderation.

### Lecture 35 (506c5-508c3)<sup>656</sup>

35.1. **'Then listen to me while I take up the discussion again from the beginning'** (506c5): it has already been said that a statesman is a person who knows how to distinguish the pleasant from the profitable and the good from the bad and the fine from the base.<sup>657</sup> So now Socrates had to demonstrate the goal of constitutional well-being, [namely] that it is the good, which occurs through temperance and justice and the other virtues. But Callicles recoiled, for he could not endure hearing intemperance reviled. So Socrates engages in dialogue with himself, asking questions, doing the puzzling, and giving the answers. He says 'Since Callicles has interrupted the flow of the argument, I shall take it up again from the beginning'. He does not mean from the beginning of the dialogue—that would be foolish—but from a beginning, from a particular starting-point, in this case from the starting-point of [discussion of] the final cause.<sup>658</sup>

On resumption he constructs a syllogism to show that the happy man is temperate and just, as follows: 'The happy man<sup>659</sup> possesses

<sup>655</sup> Dodds suggests that Ol. may be guessing here; there is no evidence.

<sup>656</sup> In lecture 35 Ol. deals with Socrates' self-answered argument, constructing arguments for the co-implication of the various virtues which seem not to adhere closely to anything in the Platonic text. He seems more concerned to prove the truth of Socrates' theses in a matter which will satisfy current, and particularly Christian tastes, than to offer a plausible exegesis of the original passage. At 35.13 there is a lengthy mathematical digression on three types of 'equality'.

<sup>657</sup> This has not been spelled out by Ol. before, but 32.1 had spoken of the coming investigation into which craft is able to distinguish what is good from what is merely pleasant (cf. 33.1). W. simply refers to *Grg.* 500a4-503d4, but the formula suggests rather than Ol. is referring to his own discussion. It is of course possible that more had been said in the course of the *lexis* than has actually been recorded.

<sup>658</sup> Ol. refers to 499b, the point at which lecture 32 begins.

<sup>659</sup> The happy man seems not to have been introduced until 507c4. But the

very great goods, [and] a man who possesses very great goods possesses his own proper goods (for the greatest of goods are our own).<sup>660</sup> A man who possesses his own proper goods possesses excellences; a man who possesses excellences is orderly and well-arranged; one who is orderly and well-arranged is temperate and just, since the order of the temperate man consists in [his] making the worse subject to the better and the arrangement of the just man consists in his knowing how to render to each his due.<sup>661</sup>

35.2. Therefore the happy man is temperate and just. And not only this, but also wise and courageous, for these [virtues] coincide with those. For the temperate man makes the worse subject to the better. And it belongs to a sensible man, and overall the wisest, to know the better and to make them surpass the worse.<sup>662</sup> Furthermore the wise and just man is also courageous. For a man who makes the worse subject to the better and who does not allow reason to be worsted by emotion, is courageous.<sup>663</sup> And justice also includes holiness. For such a man is pleasing to God.<sup>664</sup>

So the virtues coincide with one another. And it is possible from these [considerations] to resolve the puzzle concerning providence,

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sequence, good man → goods → own excellence → order/arrangement → temperance → justice, occurs at 506d-507b.

<sup>660</sup> The premises concerning one's own goods are perhaps based on the notion of each thing having its own particular excellence at 506d5, but Ol. clearly imports the general rule that, for any A, A's greatest good (and that upon which other goods depend) is A's own particular excellence. With the stress that Ol. puts upon the identity of a person and his soul, it is not surprising that *our* goods become the virtues, the goods which Plato attributes to the soul at (e.g.) *Laws* 631b-d.

<sup>661</sup> Reading ὑποτάττοντος at 178.28; W.'s -οντας is seemingly a misprint. For arrangement and order cf. 32.1, 34.2.

<sup>662</sup> Wisdom does not appear in this Platonic passage concerning the coincidence of the virtues; however Ol.'s terminology (ἔμφρων, φρόνιμος) suggest that he is reading between the lines at 507a7 where the opposite of ἔμφρων, ἄφρων occurs.

<sup>663</sup> Plato's reasoning is different: the temperate person is brave, because he neither pursues *nor* flees what he should not. Ol. has purged the notion of bravery of any hint of its principal ancient application—steadfastness in battle, so that all who fight for the triumph of goodness will be brave: another modification which will no doubt win Christian approval.

<sup>664</sup> Whereas for Plato (507b1-3) Ta→Ja.Ha (where T=temperate, J=just, and H=holy), Ol. claims that Ta→Ja→Ha, since the Gods love justice, and it is thus our *religious* duty to be just; hence the just man, qua just, performs his religious duty. The notions that (i) justice includes holiness and (ii) holiness is pleasing to (all) the Gods are found in the *Euthyphro*, but not the notion that secular acts of justice are also (qua just) holy; this may be supplied from *Prt.* 331b. Ol.'s argument would make excellent sense to a Christian audience.

[which says] 'if virtue is sufficient for well-being,<sup>665</sup> then those who possess the virtues should not have to pray and make requests of God, but to find that what they have suffices'. We say 'We have said that the temperate man will know what's better and make it surpass [the worse], for this is what's holy. So one should pray, for prayer is a sign of our knowing the better and summoning it, so that prayer is included among the virtues via holiness'.<sup>666</sup>

35.3. After saying these things Socrates next says 'If this is the case, then Polus was wrong to criticize Gorgias, saying "You wrongly agreed, Gorgias, that the orator should be knowledgeable about justice"<sup>667</sup> and further on Callicles was very wrong to criticize Polus, saying "Intemperance is good". For Socrates has shown that the happy man will cling only to what is just, and that temperance and justice are good. Hence we should not put up with the passions but excise them.<sup>668</sup> For if we are grateful to doctors who rid our bodies of long-term sufferings, we ought to be much more grateful to those who rid the soul of hardened passions. Furthermore, if those with sick bodies readily present themselves for cautery and surgery and other pains for the sake of being healed, then those with diseased souls should all the more [readily] remove the passions with fire and steel. We should remember these arguments, for they are strong enough to soothe the multi-headed beasts within us.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Here we follow W.'s correction to the text which appears in his *ap.crit.*

<sup>666</sup> This again seems likely to involve some politically correct manoeuvres. Ol. has just associated knowing what's better and making it surpass the worse with *wisdom*, and had not seen wisdom as *dependent* in any way on holiness. Now, however, because of the conventional and Christian association of prayer with holiness, this latter must appear as the necessary connexion between excellence and prayer. Note also that Ol. is assuming that because prayer is *a sign* of virtue, it is essential to it. This suggests a much greater devotion to outward symbols than would have been characteristic of Greek philosophy.

<sup>667</sup> It makes no sense to include μόνων ('only') in the translation here. Ol. is commenting on 508b-c where Plato has no corresponding term. We assume that the text has been corrupted from τῶν δικαίων μόνων three lines below.

<sup>668</sup> Again (cf. 21.5, 22.2) the adherence to the strong, stoicizing doctrine of freedom from passions (πάθη) rather than the weaker position that they are to be moderated, often found in Platonism. Ol.'s position is consequent on his regarding the passions as deviations from the correct state of soul (= constitution), and hence as vices. It also follows from the fact that the term πάθη is used below to describe both bodily and psychical affections, so that the latter become analogous to disease.

<sup>669</sup> For the inspiration behind the analogy, used also at 34.3, see *Rep.* 9

- 35.4. **'Quite'** (506d2): Socrates answers himself.
- 35.5. **'And craft, the one assigned to each of them'** (506d7):<sup>670</sup> note that [Socrates] refers to the creative cause.
- 35.6. **'Well, I say that if the temperate soul is good'** (507a5): he establishes his point via the converse: for if the temperate soul is good, then the intemperate is clearly bad.
- 35.7. **'Not ... to avoid or pursue'** (507b5-6): for the just man must neither pursue and embrace evil nor shun good. For such conduct is not fitting.
- 35.8. **'And pains'** (507b7): note that while it is often necessary to flee pains, if they make no contribution to well-being, it is also often necessary to pursue and welcome them, if they will acquaint us with virtue.
- 35.9. **'As fast as each of us can run'** (507d2): i.e., 'We must, with all of our powers, flee evil actions'. So he used the term 'feet' metaphorically, as in 'the feet of Ida'. Hence we should flee worthless and base dealings, and we ought not to wheel about like a spinning coin<sup>671</sup> but to despise the passions.
- 35.10. **'I believe this is the aim'**<sup>672</sup> (507d6): the sophists<sup>673</sup> started quarrelling long ago, because [the word] 'aim' was nowhere found to denote 'plan'. Lo and behold it is found here. For 'we should possess this aim' stands for 'We should plan for the good and make it our goal'. An aim and a goal differ only in position, because an aim is the starting-point and a goal is an aim brought to actuality.
- 35.11. **'An endless evil—while he lives the life of a brigand'** (507e3): 'an endless evil', since he always spends his time on these things and never finds an end and is not fulfilled, just like the jar that is leaky is never filled up, since what is poured in always flows out and the hole becomes greater with the flow. Such a

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588c-589b. Note Ol.'s use of the term *ικανός*, which had been a favourite of Callicles, first occurring at 484a ('a *physis* which is up to the task'), then at 485e (the philosopher can say nothing up to the task), before being taken up pointedly by Socrates at 486d6, 487b7, d4, 488a5, and 489a6. At two of these points it is used to describe Callicles' attributes, his education and his powers of discernment. Callicles himself then resumes his use of this terminology at 491b3, 492a1, and b3.

<sup>670</sup> Ol. uses a different text from ours, reading *τέχνη τις ἐκάστω* for *τέχνη ἥτις ἐκάστω*.

<sup>671</sup> A proverbial expression, originally from the game of flip the potsherd.

<sup>672</sup> Irwin had 'goal', which fits the point that Ol. is making less well.

<sup>673</sup> Presumably the Neoplatonists had incurred the wrath of their detractors for using the term *σκοπός* for a dialogue's 'aim' (see 0.2, 0.4) in what was allegedly a barbarous sense.



person constantly lives the 'life of a brigand' since he commits injustice. So he desires what is not his. So he preys upon women and possessions. He does these things secretly just like a brigand, for one who is full of injustice leads a brigand's life.

35.12. '**For he is incapable of community**' (507e5): for community is a kind of friendship, and friendship, as the wise say—that is the Pythagoreans, and Empedocles when he says that friendship unites the Sphere—is what makes things one. For friendship is present at the single starting-point of all things, since at that level unity is everywhere and division is nowhere.<sup>674</sup> So the unjust man is hateful to all and is in communion with none.

35.13. '**Bound by community**' (508a1): 'For earth and heaven and all the universe are bound together by friendship, since it is what makes things one. You failed to notice, Callicles, that geometrical equality has great power among both gods and men'.

Note that there are three equalities, *geometrical*, *arithmetical* and *harmonic*.<sup>675</sup> Geometrical equality is [what occurs] when analogy is preserved, for example as 8 is to 4, so 4 is to 2. For in each case there is a relation of two to one. Arithmetical [equality] is [what occurs] when the same *excess* is preserved. We say [a case of] arithmetical [equality occurs] when the order of numbers proceeds *by excess* as follows: for 2 exceeds 1 by 1 unit, and 3 exceeds 2 by 1, and 4 [exceeds] 3 [by one], and 5 [exceeds] 4 [by one], and so on. So 6 and 5 and 4 involve arithmetical equality. Now arithmetical equality maintains the same excess, but not [the same] analogy. For just as 6 exceeds 5 by 1, so too 5 [exceeds] 4. We have here the same

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<sup>674</sup> It would appear from this that for Ol. friendship is implicit in the Neoplatonic One, from which all else emanates. This appears both to assimilate the Neoplatonic One to the Empedoclean sphere, and thus to compromise its transcendence. Most late Neoplatonists had preferred to see in the Sphere an entity inferior to the One, e.g. Syrianus *In Met.* 11.26-36; the Sphere is rather identified with the Intelligible World, 42.35-43.28, 187.19-27, and of course Proclus, *In Prm.* 723.14-724.13. On Empedocles among the Neoplatonists see Mansfeld (1992) 245-62.

<sup>675</sup> With the following passages W. compares Nicom. *Intro.* 2.22-27 and Proc. *In Tim.* 2.171.19-173.4. It should however be noted that these passages are concerned with arithmetic, geometric, and harmonic *means*, not with three types of equality. Since the notion of a mean implies the presence of two distances which are *in some way* equal, O. interprets Plato's reference to geometrical equality as if three types of equality paralleled the three types of mean. In a sense this is natural if a mean is an equal distance from two extremes, but this leads to some obscurity in the discussion of harmonic 'equality'.

excess, but not the same analogy. For 6 is one fifth [more] than 5, whereas 5 is not one fifth [more] but one quarter [more] than 4. In geometrical equality, however, it is the reverse. For analogy is preserved and [geometrical] equality occurs. For just as 8 is double 4, so too 4 is [double] 2. But the excess is not equal, for 8 exceeds 4 by 4, whereas 4 exceeds 2 by 2. And harmonic [equality] is that in which the parts of the multiples are the same, for example 12, 8, 6.<sup>676</sup> For 12 exceeds 8 by 4, and 4 is one third of 12. So too 8 exceeds 6 by 2, and this same 2 is one third of 6.<sup>677</sup> Now this will serve as an outline of equality.

Note that geometry contributes to distributions, and arithmetic to contractual dealings.<sup>678</sup> So it belongs to geometry to make a distribution that is appropriate. For when a general distributes the spoils he does not give the same to all, but more to those who fought best, and less to the others. So too the poet says 'a good man put on good [armour], but the worse they gave to worse men'.<sup>679</sup> Similarly geometry dwells also in the universe, since nothing is without order, but each thing has been afforded its own proper measure.

35.14. **'If I was serious when I said them'** (508b4-5): for Calicles thought that [Socrates] spoke in play. For instance he asked Chaerephon 'Is Socrates speaking seriously or in play?' Not only is Socrates not playing when he declares this, but he is in fact hunting for a way to demonstrate these conclusions with threads of adamant.<sup>680</sup>

35.15. **'And those things you thought Polus conceded to me out of shame'** (508b7): 'And the things you believed Polus conceded

<sup>676</sup> The difference between 8 and 6 is 2, a third of 6; the difference between 8 and 12 is 4, a third of 12, 12 being a multiple of 6.

<sup>677</sup> The example is drawn from the study of a cube, which has 12 lines, 8 angles, and 6 surfaces (Nic. *Intr.* 2.26.2).

<sup>678</sup> From this sentence to the end of 35.13 W. compares *Laws* 6.757b1-d1, where two kinds of equality are contrasted (identifiable with Ol.'s arithmetic and geometrical); Plato certainly recommends the geometrical type for distribution of honours, while the arithmetic kind is particularly concerned with selection by lot (giving equal chances to each person regardless of merit). Overall, however, there seems to be no obvious debt to this passage of Plato. The two kinds of equality also feature in Aristotle's social theory, *Pol.* 5.1 1301b29-1302a8, *EN* 8.7 1158b30-33 and 5.4 1131b-1132a30, and this last passage clearly inspires the notion that arithmetic equality should be applied to private transactions (Aristotle's term is *συνάλλαγμα*, 1131b33). On geometrical *analogy* cf. 14.9.

<sup>679</sup> Homer *Iliad* 14. 382.

<sup>680</sup> Based on *Grg.* 508e7 ('is bound') and 509a1-2 ('iron and adamant arguments').

out of shame are in fact true'. So tyranny is not the paradigmatic cause of the statesman; instead it is the universe, on which one who is going to strive after well-being must fix his gaze.<sup>681</sup>

35.16. 'Which again [Polus said] Gorgias [conceded out of shame]' (508c3): so it has also been demonstrated that the good orator must be just. So what Polus said is not true: for Polus said that Gorgias conceded out of shame that the orator needs to strive after just dealings.<sup>682</sup>

### Lecture 36 (508c4-509c5)<sup>683</sup>

36.1. 'Since that is so' (508c4-509c5): for every postulate we need two arguments. For necessarily there are two modes of arguments: the first examines the postulate in its own right, [establishing] for instance that the soul is immortal or that the cosmos is eternal—for this very examination of the postulate by itself establishes what's postulated.<sup>684</sup> The other argument refutes and removes the difficulties that are brought against the positive case that has been established.

So this is what Socrates does too, and whereas he has earlier established his postulate in its own right, now he resolves the difficulties too. What postulate was it? The one that declared that the happy man is temperate and just. This he has already established in what went before, saying:

The happy man has the greatest of goods  
He who has the greatest of goods has virtue  
He who has virtue is orderly and well-arranged  
He who is orderly and well-arranged is temperate and just  
Therefore the happy man is temperate and just.<sup>685</sup>

Also he says that intemperance is an evil, while order is a good thing. And Isocrates and others too have handed this down to us in

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<sup>681</sup> For the paradigmatic cause cf. 0.5. There is a connexion with *Rep.* 9 592b.

<sup>682</sup> Putting the emphasis on the would-be orator's actual use of rhetoric, not on his knowledge of how to use it as at 460a and 461b.

<sup>683</sup> In lecture 36 Ol. moves on to how Socrates counters the practical advice given by Callicles. He stresses the priority of one's soul over one's body and one's possessions, and supports Plato's statement here about the supremacy of avoiding *doing* wrong against the attack of Aristides.

<sup>684</sup> The general sense is clear, but the expression somewhat obscure.

<sup>685</sup> Ol. refers to his own analysis at 35.1, somewhat pruned.

their moral writings,<sup>686</sup> but we are indebted to Socrates<sup>687</sup> for stating it demonstratively.

36.2. That is the postulate established in its own right, and next [Socrates] needs to refute the difficulties raised by Callicles. Observe that Callicles too was presenting difficulties of two sorts, first what he was encouraging people to practise, and second what he was discouraging them from.<sup>688</sup> He encouraged them to indulge themselves in luxury, to be rich, to be lawless and to kill, and he claimed that this was the happy life. He discouraged them from the philosophic life, and said 'The philosophical life is pitiable and wretched. For it is possible, Socrates, for anyone who wishes to strike blows to your head or abuse you or kill you or injure you or quite simply to do anything at all to you'.<sup>689</sup> These then are the difficulties.

Socrates responds to these difficulties, saying: 'Not suffering injustice belongs either to a ruler or to another of the same constitution. For a ruler does not suffer injustice, nor does a man who though not a ruler happens to be a friend of the rulers—friend, that is, by disposition rather than by pretence. For if he is truly an enemy of the rulers but through acting out a servile role seems to be a friend, later on he is put to the test, incurs hatred and is cast out. Whereas if he is in fact a friend of the rulers, so long as they are rulers he is their friend and does not suffer injustice'.<sup>690</sup>

36.3. On hearing this Callicles is delighted, and says 'What's this, Socrates? Didn't I tell you this, and didn't you suppose I was talking nonsense?' in the belief that Socrates did in fact mean the same thing.<sup>691</sup> So Socrates uses the necessities of demonstrative reasoning to show that such people are wretched. He says 'If I show that I am not being harmed with regard to the greatest of goods, what concern is it to me even if I am beaten or treated violently? I do not care about this body of mine.' Anaxarchus too used to make the same point when he said 'Go ahead and grind

<sup>686</sup> See Isoc. *On the Peace* 119.

<sup>687</sup> It is interesting that the argument is clearly being attributed to Socrates himself at this point.

<sup>688</sup> Note that the *aporia* here is not one of theory but of practice.

<sup>689</sup> W. refers here to 486a4-c3, but Ol.'s presentation of Callicles' theory is more extreme.

<sup>690</sup> This looks ahead to *Grg.* 510a. For the difference between the flatterer and the friend cf. 14.2.

<sup>691</sup> Tentatively reading ταῦτά for ταῦτα at 185.15.

down Anaxarchus' pouch, because you're never going to grind down Anaxarchus himself.'<sup>692</sup>

In order to discover the greatest good, let us take three things: *soul*, *body* and *external [goods]*.<sup>693</sup> The soul has first place, since this is what moves the body, the body is intermediate, and third comes the externals. Note that for these things there are different measures of goodness, and likewise of vice. The greatest good is that of the soul, less [good] than that is the good of the body, and less still that of the externals. We should be more concerned about the greatest good and choose the lesser evil for the sake of the greatest good. That is how we look upon externals too. The good of the body is health, its evil is sickness. The greatest external good is wealth, and the [greatest] corresponding evil is poverty. Which then is better, to possess health with poverty, or wealth with incurable sickness? Clearly it is better to be poor but healthy, since health is a greater good.

36.4. If this is so in the case of the body, it is all the more true with the soul. It is better to possess the good of the soul although one's body is beaten and maltreated and one's externals goods are confiscated. So if the philosopher is beaten and deprived of his money, he despises these things, attending to one thing alone, not to be deprived of the good of his soul. So it is in vain that Callicles supposes that others injure philosophers, for what is really good—the good of the soul—in not taken away. Hence we should concern ourselves in every case with the greatest good, despising the body. And it is a fine thing, as has been said, to betray neither, neither one's soul nor one's body, but if violence should come upon one, it is better to embrace the soul and not betray it, and to hand the body over to the one who wants to beat or abuse it.

And this has been well said. But Aristides the orator, the one who wrote the Panathenaic speech,<sup>694</sup> says in his *Epistle to Capiton*,<sup>695</sup> 'I can show that Plato himself admits that rhetoric is

<sup>692</sup> An anecdote popular among late Neoplatonists and in late antiquity from the time of Philo of Alexandria (refs. in W) told how Anaxarchus, being tortured by the tyrant Archelaus, spoke these words which show contempt for his body.

<sup>693</sup> The threefold division of goods, now a commonplace, occurs at *Grg.* 477a-c, and is particularly prominent in this lecture; it also features at 23.1, 26.7, 40.4, 43.1.

<sup>694</sup> *Or.* 13D = 1Lenz/Behr.

<sup>695</sup> *Or.* 47 pp. 421.27-423.3D = 4.17-18Behr. On the title see Lenz (1946) 122, who also discusses Ol.'s rather cavalier approach to the text of Aristides. Behr

better than philosophy'. Let us set out his theory in full. Aristides says 'In the eighth book of the *Laws*<sup>696</sup> Plato says that not committing injustice is a lesser good, while not suffering injustice is a great and divine good. So since not suffering injustice is a very great and divine good according to Plato, and not committing injustice is a lesser good, and since not suffering injustice is the task of rhetoric and not committing injustice the task of philosophy, therefore rhetoric is a greater good than philosophy.'<sup>697</sup>

36.5. So said Aristides, but he fell into a fallacious inference due to ambiguity—for we should realize that nearly all fallacious inferences are due to ambiguity. 'Not suffering injustice' and 'not committing injustice' are twofold, primary and non-primary. 'Not suffering injustice' is used in a primary and a non-primary sense, and so is 'not committing injustice': primary when applied to the soul, non-primary when applied to the body or externals. For instance, 'not suffering injustice' is applied to the soul in the sense of not having one's soul disturbed nor feeling guilty about any unjust act. Hence a man who does not suffer injustice in his soul commits no injustice. For in general if the soul is not disturbed then neither has it done any injustice to anyone. So not suffering injustice in one's soul coincides with not committing any injustice.

Note that if a man achieved a life which was Socratic or Platonic with regard to goodness, and an Achillean and Heraclean [life] with regard to the avoidance of bodily harm, then he would be harmed neither in the soul nor in relation to the body or externals. He would not be harmed in soul because he is good, and he would not be harmed in relation to the body or externals because he was able to look after himself with the power of Achilles or Heracles. If

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(1968) is more scathing, and claims that Ol. had first-hand knowledge neither of Aristides nor of Porphyry's polemic (187).

<sup>696</sup> 829a: the passage is beset by a textual difficulty, and some readings, including that of Stobaeus, regard *not wronging others* as easier than not being wronged; however, the correct reading speaks of *not wronging one another*, the well-being of the city rather than the individual being under consideration. Note too that Plato's distinction is between the levels of difficulty in providing for these desirable outcomes; the more difficult outcome is not necessarily better, though it is said to demand complete virtue. The statement is offered by Plato as a justification for military training, and he could not have intended the 'primary' sense spoken of by Ol.

<sup>697</sup> Merely a paraphrase of Aristides, whose argument is fuller and not unattractive. Ol.'s précis makes it seem sharper, but also renders it easier to answer so long as the Platonic text is ignored.

he were merely good, he would have the power to avoid suffering injustice in soul but would suffer injustice in relation to the body or to externals. So in the eighth book of the *Laws* Plato says that not suffering injustice is a very great and divine good—not in relation to externals but in relation to the soul. And that he is referring to the soul is shown by what it leads on to—for he says ‘This happens to nobody except the good man alone’. Do you see that he is speaking of the soul? Hence people should not take up arms against the truth with fallacious inferences, since it is they themselves who are refuted and not the truth, seeing that the truth is never refuted.

36.6. **‘Or my purse’** (508e1): i.e. ‘nor to be fined’.

36.7. **‘Even if it is a bit impolite to say so’** (508e7-509a): because some say that Socrates indicates doubt when he uses these expressions,<sup>698</sup> bear in mind that he declares his view and says that this has been demonstrated by iron and adamant arguments. He uses the term ‘a bit impolite’, because he has employed this metaphor, applying iron and adamant to arguments.

36.8. **‘Or someone more vigorous than you’** (509a3): it is because he said that the arguments are bound by iron bonds, that he persisted in his exhortation and said ‘If you have somebody sharper than yourself, bring him to loosen the arguments.’ But they are unable to be loosened, because they are strong.

36.9. **‘Than the greatest, if that is possible’** (509b2-3): he has said ‘greatest’, and he wanted to use a stronger term but there is nothing greater than the greatest, so on this account he added ‘if this is possible’.

36.10. **‘And the second most shameful will be the lack of defence against the second most serious evil’** (509b8-c1): that of the body; for this is second after that of the soul, and third is that of externals.

36.11. **‘No other way’** (509e5): because nobody can argue against demonstrative arguments.

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<sup>698</sup> W. cites anon. *Prol.* 10, where the author speaks of those who regard Plato’s Socrates as a sceptic because of expressions which might indicate hesitation. Ol. shows awareness of such passages in his *Phaedo*-commentary, 8.17 (where Ammonius’ work of refutation of them is referred to), 6.14, 10.15.

**Lecture 37 (509c6-511b6)<sup>699</sup>**

37.1. **Now of these two things'** (509c6): all the basic lessons [here] have already been communicated, and we are again recalling the same ones. Note that [Socrates] is still resisting Callicles, who said committing injustice was a fine thing, and suffering injustice was paltry and base and fitting for philosophers. Socrates, on the other hand, said it was fine to experience neither of them, but that, if overtaken by necessity, it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it. So Socrates says to Callicles 'Tell me, what is needed to avoid suffering injustice? Is it the will alone, or not only the will but also power?' We should understand that it requires power also.<sup>700</sup> For if we wish not to suffer injustice, yet lack the power, we achieve nothing. Hence power is also needed, and one should either be a ruler or the friend of a ruler.<sup>701</sup>

Again, what is needed to avoid committing injustice? Is it the will alone, or is power also needed? We must understand that power is also needed,<sup>702</sup> and not only power but also craft. For a man who does not wish to commit injustice needs to possess a craft that knows the nature of injustice and justice, because, if he did not know what is just and what unjust, he would commit injustice out of general ignorance. Hence there is a need of craft. And he should either possess [the craft] himself,<sup>703</sup> just as a doctor knows what is beneficial and what is harmful with regard to pursuit and avoidance, or, if he does not possess the craft, then he should learn it from one who does.

37.2. That is why there are people who ask 'How shall I settle this business, so that I do not commit injustice?' Hence there is also a need of craft.

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<sup>699</sup> In lecture 37 Ol. seems to be hampered by his realization that Plato is recapitulating. He treats the will and the power required to avoid (i) being wronged and (ii) wronging others, deriving the power for the former from the constitutional craft and that for the latter from virtue. The doctrine that nobody errs willingly is discussed, and the *theoria* ends with some moralizing over the respective demerits of committing and receiving wrongs.

<sup>700</sup> Power has already been a key topic, especially in lectures 11 and 15-16.

<sup>701</sup> Supplying καὶ ἦ to fill W.'s lacuna.

<sup>702</sup> Filling the supposed lacuna as W. does.

<sup>703</sup> Reading ἦ for ὁ as suggested by W.'s apparatus. We meet now an incomplete use of Ol.'s favourite analogy, involving the contrast between doctor and chemist, cf. 1.13, 32.3-4, 42.1.



If then there is a need for power in not suffering injustice and a need for power in not committing injustice, what is the difference in these powers? I say that the power of not suffering injustice is that of the constitutional craft, for it belongs to the ruler or a friend of the ruler. And the power of not committing injustice depends on virtue. For it belongs to virtue not to commit injustice. This is power in its primary sense, whereas committing injustice is a mark of lack of power and it is not our will to commit injustice. For good and power and will coincide. For power is what brings salvation. For while a man who commits injustice thinks he is acting well, he does not will it. For only a man who wants the good wills.<sup>704</sup>

Hence we meet here the Platonic doctrine that all wrongdoing is involuntary,<sup>705</sup> seeing that we do not will it. And it is a paradoxical doctrine: for we do observe voluntary wrongdoing too, and Plato himself in the *Republic* says that some wrongdoing is voluntary and some involuntary.<sup>706</sup> For example, Orestes voluntarily did wrong in killing his mother, whereas a man who kills someone mistakenly for someone else, whether at night or in daytime, does wrong involuntarily. So why is it that he here says that all wrongdoing is involuntary? We say that he calls it involuntary insofar as we mislead ourselves with fallacious inference. For example, Orestes in the belief that every husband-killing woman deserves to die, immediately kills his own mother.<sup>707</sup> Observe how he misleads himself with fallacious inference. For even if she had to be murdered, it should have been done by someone else and not by her own son. Hence it is said that he murdered her involuntarily, insofar as he was ignorant of the minor premise<sup>708</sup> and misled

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<sup>704</sup> The will (βούλησις) is here distinguished from desire in general in that it is always directed towards the actual good, never to the imagined good. The Stoics (SVF 3.173, 431-2, 437-8) had regarded will as the wise man's healthy equivalent to the fool's desire, being a εὐπάθεια rather than a πάθος.

<sup>705</sup> As seen also at 10.3, Ol. does not associate this doctrine with Socrates rather than Plato, as we might. He can point, however, to *Laws* 860d1 (see next note) as a Platonic passage independent of Socrates that reaffirms the basic thrust of this doctrine.

<sup>706</sup> In fact *Laws* 9.860d-862c. For a similar error see 17.7. Ol. refers regularly to both works by name. No significance may be read into the fact that the *Republic* is referred to in the plural here; Ol. uses the plural name for the book itself.

<sup>707</sup> The Orestes example occurs also at 10.3.

<sup>708</sup> This is labelled the major premise at 10.3.

himself with fallacious inference. It is said to be involuntary since we fall into falsehood involuntarily. For no-one loves ignorance, but 'everyone desires understanding, a sign of which is our delight in the senses'.<sup>709</sup>

37.3. Hence we should not commit injustice, since a man who commits injustice and seizes what does not belong to him, such as fields or such like, takes the field but ends by crippling his soul and exchanging his soul for the field—not gold for copper like Diomedes, but copper for gold like Glaucos, and earthly things for heavenly ones.<sup>710</sup> For he prefers external things and loses his soul. Hence an unjust man should not kill a pious man, for this is most base. Now Callicles says (511b6) 'We should be upset if a pious man is killed', whereas Socrates says 'We should not be upset that a pious man was killed, for he saved his soul even if he lost his body. Instead, we should pity the killer, and grieve that he fouled his soul and that for the sake of external wealth he unjustly killed a man who had done him no harm'. Hence we should shun these people and not be their friends.

Note that a bad man is not a friend of a bad man. For friendship is between people in tune with one another, and like are friends of like, whereas people out of tune, as is said in the *Laws* (716c), are friends neither with each other nor with people in tune; for how can a tuneless person be a friend. If such a person were to become a friend of a tyrant,<sup>711</sup> and tyrants are unjust, he would only be increasing his wickedness. So there is need then everywhere for the right constitution.

37.4. **'You can say that that's so, Socrates'** (510a1): irritated and unable to find something to say in response, he says 'Let this be so, draw whatever conclusion what you want.'

37.5. **'Or as little as possible? See if you think'** (510a7): 'Or as little as possible' is well said, for though it is possible both to be a ruler and not to commit injustice, it is nevertheless likely that such a man will be cheated by his own servant and be said to suffer injustice. This is why [Socrates] said 'Or as little as possible', i.e. 'He cannot suffer injustice, except in the rare case of his own servant filching something'. Yet in the old days someone had said

<sup>709</sup> Ol. alludes to the opening of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 980a21-22.

<sup>710</sup> See *Iliad* 6.236.

<sup>711</sup> Deleting the first τύραννος at 191.26.

to Alexander of Macedon 'Someone has stolen this from you', and he replied 'He did not steal it, for even then it is still mine'.<sup>712</sup> Such was his confidence in his own proud claim to rule over all.

37.6. **'Do you see how ready I am to praise you, Socrates'** (510a11): Callicles thinks that this is Socrates' real position, and is delighted and says 'I, too, Socrates take the same position as you propose.'

37.7. **'As wise men of old say'** (510b4): for he had also made this claim earlier, saying that the Pythagoreans held friendship governs this universe.<sup>713</sup>

37.8. **'Won't he be quite unable to become a friend'** (510c1): because they are not alike, but are badly matched. For one of them is weaker and the other is far superior.

37.9. **'For the tyrant will despise him'** (510c4): for while we fear what is stronger [than us] because it's more powerful, we regard what's poor as not worth consideration because it's easily despised, as in the verse 'neither in consideration nor in account'.<sup>714</sup>

37.10. **'And hate the same things as the tyrant'** (510d7): observe how he made such a man a slave, since he lives in servile fashion, and wretchedly, and is more, in fact, than a slave.

37.11. **'On the account you offer'** (510e1): observe he did not say 'On the account I offer', but 'On the account you offer', in order to show that they are living with injustice and are pitiful and wretched and worst off.

37.12. **'And disfigured'** (511a2): for if, like a slave, in order to resemble his master still more, he siezes land or something else, he possesses a disfigured soul.

37.13. **'Somehow you always twist'** (511a4): Callicles is annoyed again.

37.14. **'If I'm not deaf'** (511b1): 'For I hear from all the rabble that every man who has the power to kill and expropriate is great. But you hear from me that it is as a worthless man that he kills a good man.' Then Callicles says 'This is what is annoying', while Socrates says 'We should not grieve for the one who was killed, but

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<sup>712</sup> The point being that the possessions of the slave remain the possessions of the master.

<sup>713</sup> 507e6. Cf. 35.12.

<sup>714</sup> *Anth.Pal.* 14.73.8: the poem tells the Megarians that, besides other noteworthy peoples, they don't come third, fourth, twelfth, in fact they don't come into the reckoning at all.

for the man who unjustly killed him and who is supposed to be alive'.<sup>715</sup>

### Lecture 38 (511b7-512d6)<sup>716</sup>

38.1. 'Not if we have any intelligence—so the argument indicates' (511b): Callicles has been affected to some extent by Socrates' arguments, but even so he has not yet eliminated all his passions. For he has agreed that we should not compare intemperance with the good. But now he suffers from a seemlier passion, which is also shared by most men, [the belief] that death is the greatest evil and life the greatest good. This is also Callicles' view and he says 'If being [alive] is the greatest good, while death is the greatest evil, and rhetoric will save men from death, while philosophy will cause their death—as indeed Socrates was put to death on trumped up charges—then rhetoric is greater than philosophy'. So Socrates replies 'Death is not the greatest evil, for it concerns the body. Whereas we derive our being principally from the soul. Hence we should attend to the soul in every case and not care if the body dies. For if our true being comes from the soul, then let us always be concerned for that. And so let us fasten upon the good. For the good has a wider range than existence and it is surely not the case that non-existence automatically belongs among evils. For it is possible, while we no longer exist in this life, for us still to be in a good situation through our soul's being well constituted. For we are not the body nor the combination [of body and soul] but a soul alone that employs the body as an instrument.'<sup>717</sup>

38.2. Socrates establishes this in the following way: he says '<if> simple preservation of life were the greatest good, and death the greatest evil, then those crafts that favour us with life would be the greatest, and those that bring us death would be the worst. If that were so, then the pilot's craft would be the greatest, especially if it

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<sup>715</sup> The theme that our life here is less a life than is experienced in the other world is raised at 29.3 in relation to *Grg.* 492e-493a. That theme suggests that mourning simply because a person has died is not really appropriate. It is picked up at the beginning of the next lecture.

<sup>716</sup> In lecture 38 Ol. continues to question human notions of life and death, arguing that the individual is really just the soul, and so survives death. This leads to evaluation of the crafts that preserve one from death, and to further criticism of Aristides' objections to this part of *Grg.*

<sup>717</sup> Again dependent on *Alc.* 129b-130c.

should save our possessions at sea and children and wives and husbands. In that case it ought to be high and mighty. And yet it does not put on airs the way rhetoric does.

Furthermore, mechanics [would have a yet] stronger [claim to be] the greatest [craft], on the grounds that it saves whole cities. So Archimedes set fire to the triremes by means of burning glasses and saved the whole city.<sup>718</sup> So these are the greatest crafts and greater than rhetoric. So would it give you pleasure to marry a pilot's daughter or sister or some other relative? No, you would not have thought him good enough. And yet you ought,<sup>719</sup> since [the pilot's craft] saves. Hence we should not regard this sort of saviour highly; in some cases one should rather be ungrateful. For what if a pilot saved a man who had an incurable suffering and was in a state of collapse?<sup>720</sup> He would be begging not to be saved, indeed to die rather than to live so wretchedly. And furthermore he is not doing a favour to someone with sufferings in the soul, for that person ought rather to die. Hence we should despise death and maintain everywhere one aim, to benefit our soul.

So this was well said. But Aristides, that controversialist and specialist in lengthy quibbles, misleads himself in these matters with false inference (though he can't mislead Socrates), and says 'Apparently wealth is extremely bad as it preserves us from death and provides what we need, and so is health too.<sup>721</sup> And, in addition to this, are we to be ungrateful to the gods, because it's them who have indulged us with life and keep us safe?'

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<sup>718</sup> The story of Archimedes' grand engineering exploits to harass the Romans during the siege of Syracuse is told by a variety of authors. Earlier sources (Polybius, Livy, Plutarch) do not mention this story, which is represented as uncontroversial by Anthemius (*Paradoxographi Graeci* pp. 153.12-13 and 156.24-157.3 Westermann). Anthemius confirms the sense given to πύρια here.

<sup>719</sup> I.e. if you thought preservation the greatest good.

<sup>720</sup> The text here apparently gives an odd meaning, 'pierced through', if one relies on the MS reading συμπεπαρμένον. Thus W. suggests reading ἀλγηδόσι συμπεπαρμένον 'transfixed with pains'. Perhaps though we should see the participle as deriving from συμτέρβω or as a corruption of a form so derived, which would give the translation above.

<sup>721</sup> Here Aristides 46.229.11D = 3.187Behr may be relevant, but it inadequately explains the comment. Lenz (1946), 111-12, regards the passage marked as a quotation as Ol.'s, and argues that the words of Aristides have dropped out. It is more likely that Ol. has misunderstood something which he read in earlier critics of Aristides. Lenz fails to consider the resumption of Ol.'s attack at the end of 38.3.

38.3. We say, then, that Aristides does not know the nature of things.<sup>722</sup> There are different grades of good, for there is good in wealth, there is good in the body, and there is good in the soul. It is fine to use all [three] for a good [purpose], but we must attend in particular to the good of the soul, and less to the good to do with the body, and still less to the good to do with possessions.

So we acknowledge a debt of gratitude to those who give us wealth and to doctors who heal us and to teachers who teach us and benefit the soul<sup>723</sup>—but not the same debt to all of them, but most to those who make the soul healthy, and less to the doctors, and still less to financiers. For indeed Plato himself praises wealth that is orderly and says 'There is a wealth that is blind, but also one that is clear-sighted, if it comes along with wisdom'.<sup>724</sup> Observe that he says 'along with' and 'comes', so that it should not follow wisdom at a distance but close at hand. And [Aristides] said that we [Platonists] are not grateful to the gods for granting us being: note how absurdly he speaks. For God granted us being together with *well* being, since God did not want us to live basely. For instance he gave us being together with the common notions, so we might aim at the good, and for this reason, namely well being, he gave us rational souls, that we might have the power to turn toward the better. Hence we should choose well-being rather than [simply] being.

38.4. If Callicles<sup>725</sup> says that the pilot's craft, although it saves, is nevertheless unreasoning and for that reason not valuable, whereas rhetoric on the other hand is a reasoning craft,<sup>726</sup> reply that rhetoric ought on that account to be the less valued, because while it has pretensions to reason it tries to save unjustly. For just as unreasoning animals live by nature yet are not blamed for not using reason, whereas we rational creatures go wrong and are punished for despising the reasoning powers we use<sup>727</sup> and acting

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<sup>722</sup> The standard philosophic criticism of non-philosophic rhetoric.

<sup>723</sup> Including Ol. himself, who is very conscious of his own proper status in society.

<sup>724</sup> Part paraphrase, part quote from *Laws* 631c, where the latter kind of wealth is listed among 'human' as opposed to 'divine' goods.

<sup>725</sup> The naming of 'Callicles' in relation to a hypothetical objection is unusual for Ol., who freely uses anonymous objections.

<sup>726</sup> It should be noted that Ol. here capitalizes on the ambiguity of *logos* as (i) speech and (ii) rational argument.

<sup>727</sup> There may be a short lacuna, e.g. μετὰ λόγου <λόγου> καταφρονήσαντες

wrongly, so too rhetoric is blameworthy for trying to save [the wrong people] by using reason.

So we too praise Pericles and his party for saving bodies, but not for saving souls. If someone says that they attended to justice and did not agree with injustice being done, as a result of which they objected to the expedition against Sicily, reply that it was not simply because of their fine disposition, but because it would not be wronging others so much as [the Athenians], since even the unjust do not stand together unless they respect justice in their dealings with one another. So it was for this reason that they respected justice in their dealings with one another, namely to have the power to commit injustice toward others. So they were servants who attended to people's desires.

38.5. **'Which saves not only souls'** (511d1): now he calls lives 'souls', referring to life in the body. For it is clear that the rational soul survives even after death,<sup>728</sup> since it is immortal and is not destroyed.

38.6. **'And does not put on impressive airs'** (511d4): the pilot's craft does not involve any superior attitudes nor does it put on airs just because it favours us with life.

38.7. **'When it has done the same as'** (511d5): 'The pilot's art does not put on airs, but it does the same things as or even greater things than rhetoric, though it keeps someone safe over a short distance, such as from Aegina to here, it receives two obols; and if over a greater distance, such as from Pontus or from Egypt, it safely takes children, wives, and husbands, and brings them into the harbour, it demands only two drachmas. And then after saving them [the pilot] disembarks and walks away from the sea in a modest and orderly manner without bragging'.

38.8. **'For I suppose he knows enough to reason'** (511e6): [Socrates] uses 'to reason' to refer to the common notions. So he is saying 'The pilot does not brag for the following reason: since he lives more or less according to the common notions, he knows that he harmed some of them in saving them. For he did not benefit

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<sup>728</sup> The extent to which the soul survived death was much debated in antiquity; some believed that survival was confined to the rational part, others thought the irrational functions survived too, and others adopted a still stronger stance. See above all Dam. *In Phd.* 1.177 on the contrasting positions of (a) Numenius, (b) Plotinus, (c) Xenocrates & Speusippus & Iamblichus & Plutarch (sc. of Athens), (d) Porphyry & Proclus. Ol. takes the view of these last commentators, cf. 2.1.

them, but they remained in the same condition they were in when they came on board, either incurably sick in their bodies or enslaved in their souls to a variety of passions'.

38.9. **'If just this is virtue'** (512d3): 'If virtue were saving cities and bodies, then blaming a doctor or a mechanic would seem ridiculous to you. For they would deserve praise for performing a fine service. Hence we should pay all the more attention to preserving the soul, for this is what virtue is'.

### Lecture 39 (512d6-513d1)<sup>729</sup>

39.1. **'But no, blessed man'** (512d6): the task is to refute the postulate of Callicles that holds that 'The greatest of evils, death, arises for us through philosophy'. So Socrates says 'This is not the greatest of evils. If well-being is the greatest good and this turns out to be the goal, the opposite is the greatest evil, vice and undisciplined behaviour; that means that it's not death that is evil but living badly'.<sup>730</sup>

He then refers him to the authority of women,<sup>731</sup> saying 'If as women say it is not possible to die except at the call of destiny, why would [death] be the greatest evil? For whenever destiny wishes, we die'.<sup>732</sup> And he chooses women to refer him to, since it is in fact the mark of a womanish outlook to think that everything happens from necessity, and that nothing comes about by our choosing. For as I have said (24.3), we should blame ourselves and nothing else (or better still neither oneself nor anything else). For destiny is nothing other than the revolution of the heavens, since by such

<sup>729</sup> In lecture 39 Ol. seems to be largely concerned with the moral lessons to be derived from this passage, particularly for those who are in some way politically involved.

<sup>730</sup> Either the notetaker has missed something, or Ol. is simply equating well-being (since we are soul) with the proper internal constitution of the soul here. The opposite of well-being is traditionally wretchedness (possibly but not explicitly present in the notion of living badly); it would normally have to be established that vice and undisciplined behaviour lead to wretchedness, though in these Christian times that connexion might have been more obvious to the pupils than it would in Plato's day.

<sup>731</sup> Ol. seems to have an extra negative in his text of Plato: οὐ πιστεύσαντα, which distorts what Socrates is saying. It is not clear who the women were who Socrates is supposed to have in mind. Perhaps this is a piece of traditional women's wisdom at Athens, as Dodds suggests in his note on 512e3.

<sup>732</sup> There seems to be no reason to read the subjunctive ἀποθνήσκωμεν rather than ἀποθνήσκομεν here in view of the regular confusion of omega and omicron in this text.



and such a motion of the heavenly bodies things in our world are led along.<sup>733</sup> So do not think that it is impossible to die except at the call of destiny. For it is possible, just as long as our moral purpose forces it through, for even destiny is dependent on providence. And to put it simply, some of the things that come about are in our power, and some are not. We should therefore desire what is in our power, e.g. temperance and the other virtues. For if we desire what is not in our power, e.g. wealth, kingship, and the like, we are wasting our time, and are like those who in their dreams think they are flying. And furthermore we should avoid things in our power, e.g. intemperance, folly, and injustice, for we cannot avert things that are not in our power. For instance a man is wasting his time if he seeks to protect his friend from death or punishment, since these things are not in our power.<sup>734</sup>

39.2. In every case we should strive to grasp the good. For a man who wishes not to suffer injustice must be a friend of the ruling constitution, and a man who is a friend of the ruling constitution is assimilated to it,<sup>735</sup> and being assimilated to it he is defiled in his soul and is wiped out root and branch in the manner of the Thessalian women.<sup>736</sup> This is the story: nowadays at the time of eclipses people think that the *magi* are drawing down the moon. So too long ago it was believed that the Thessalian women said certain things, and they say that if ever they had the power to draw it down, they achieved the object of their aspiration; whereas if they were powerless to draw it down, they perished root and

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<sup>733</sup> Cf. Proc. *Prov.* 8.17-12.14. The influence of Proclus or similar Platonic views on providence, fate, and free-will, continues.

<sup>734</sup> Ol. gives a very pessimistic view of the ordinary person's ability to better his physical environment. W. compares here the *Manual* of Epictetus, 1-2, aptly in view of the influence of Epictetus (cf. 17.1-4, 26.25, 48.4) and of the typically hellenistic nature of the subject, but the present sentiments would have been widespread.

<sup>735</sup> Ol. is here supplying an interesting theoretical foundation of a bothering feature of the *Republic*: the parallel between types of person and types of state. The theory of assimilation, here related to *Grg.* 512e-513a, is used to explain why persons of a given inner constitution will come to dominate the equivalent political constitution. No doubt *Tht.* 176e-177a is also an influence, where the paradigms of which Plato speaks are reminiscent of the philosopher-king and the tyrant from *Rep.* 6 and 9. In general this passage is an excellent example of the connection between political and psychic constitutions which recurs throughout Ol.'s commentary.

<sup>736</sup> I.e. The Thessalian women of 513a. The Thessalians had 'witches' who had also been specially noted for their ability to summon down the moon in connexion with Hecate-rites. See also Ar. *Clouds* 749.

branch, themselves, their children, their husbands and their cities.<sup>737</sup>

The point he makes is this, that a man who assimilates himself to the prevailing constitution loses his soul root and branch. Observe that we should not trust these childish tales about [women] drawing down the moon—it is just an eclipse, but the majority of people are deceived by it. In much the same way, even to the present day, they say that in Egypt there are wizards who make men into crocodiles and asses, or change them into whatever shape they want, and we should not believe it.<sup>738</sup> Hence the philosopher Ammonius said to us in his exegesis,<sup>739</sup> 'This superstition won me over, and when I was boy I thought that it was true'.

So much for that matter. It is worth inquiring why he says we should not be assimilated to the constitution, yet he himself elsewhere recommends assimilation.<sup>740</sup> We reply that this assimilation [that he recommends] was not to our kind [of constitution] but to the genuine one. Plato says that the universe is our city,<sup>741</sup> and that the ruler is God. Hence we should assimilate ourselves to God and to the cosmos,<sup>742</sup> and live in accordance with *that* constitution and not with this one.

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<sup>737</sup> The dire consequences of the Thessalian witchcraft are discussed by Dodds (1959), 350-51, but in the accounts which he discusses the price, either blindness or loss of children, is a payment for her powers, not the consequence of their failure. Ol.'s sources, which must have known more than can be gleaned from *Grg.* and seem to have given prominence to the term *πρόρριζος*, are unknown.

<sup>738</sup> While the reference to Egypt is on this occasion a contemporary one, it should not be thought indicative of Ol.'s usual practice, for the material clearly derives from Ammonius.

<sup>739</sup> Probably oral lectures rather than a written commentary. It is not certain that he had been interpreting *Grg.* Any other text mentioning or alluding to metamorphosis could have provoked the observation. Note the personal nature of Ol.'s use of Ammonius here, cf. 24.2, 40.5, 41.9, 42.2, 44.4, 44.6, 48.5. He seems ready to learn from the moral lessons that Ammonius' experience had offered. The only case where Ammonius is quoted on substantial matters of philosophic exegesis is 32.2.

<sup>740</sup> W. refers us to 510a-d, but that hardly constituted an injunction to assimilate to the city, and seems insufficient to explain this passage—except perhaps if Ol. was aware of some specific objection to Plato along present the lines. Cf 39.5 below, which probably refers to 510a-d, though might refer back only to 513a.

<sup>741</sup> Perhaps with *Rep.* 592b particularly in mind.

<sup>742</sup> Assimilation to God had been the goal of Platonist ethics since early Middle Platonist times, and the *loci classici* in Plato upon which they base their view are *Tht.* 176b and *Tim.* 90a-d. The latter passage is particularly concerned with assimilation to the forces which move the cosmos.

39.3. **'Should not be anxious about his life'** (512e2): for 'We should not be too fond of life'. Here too,<sup>743</sup> he refers to life as 'soul'.

39.4. **'Better or worse'** (513b2): for what is of different quality is so either in being better or in being worse, just as what is 'unequal' is so in its being greater or smaller.

39.5. **'For you shouldn't be an imitator'** (513b3-4): and yet he has previously stated<sup>744</sup> that we should imitate our master. Why then does he say that we should not be his imitator? Understand 'not only...'. For we should not become simply an imitator, but actually have an innate desire for likeness—for if a man merely imitates and pretends, he is caught out and banished.

39.6. **'Somehow or other'** (513c4): God has sowed in us the seeds of the common notions,<sup>745</sup> so that we should not be utterly lost. So however godless and unbridled a man may be, there is always some way in which he desires the good. Accordingly Callicles admits that Socrates is speaking well, but since his upbringing and life has been in the company of the herd of men, he does not want to purge his passions completely or to be convinced by Socrates' arguments.

39.7. **'The love of Demos'** (513c7): 'It's being a lover of the people that does this to you, Callicles; you are concerned with pleasing the Athenian *demos* and Pylilampes' son, and hence you do not want to change your position'.<sup>746</sup>

39.8. **'But if we thoroughly consider these same questions often'** (513c8): He is saying what has been said in the *Phaedo*,<sup>747</sup> that we should say the same thing many times. For continuous use of beneficial arguments charms the passions into submission, and perhaps removes them. He added the 'perhaps', since it's not

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<sup>743</sup> Cf. 38.5 on 511d. In the present passage Ol. is commenting on a single word for 'should be anxious about life' (*philopsycheteon*), in which the root *psych-* supplies the reference to life, thus rendering it easy for Ol.'s pupils to misunderstand (as 'should not be soul-lovers').

<sup>744</sup> 510d4-9. Ol.'s interpretation shows close study of this passage, for it had seemed to advise really being like the ruler rather than trying to seem like him, and had not used the term 'imitate'.

<sup>745</sup> Note here the apparent connexion between the common notions and a *spermatikos logos*, a rational principle sowed into man by a higher power. On the common notions in Ol. see Tarrant (1997b) 188-192.

<sup>746</sup> Cf. 481d, 513b.

<sup>747</sup> W. refers to 114d, but the idea of repetition is not present there. See rather 77e, where we are instructed to repeat to ourselves the appropriate charms every day until relieved of our fears, used also at 20.3 and 26.10.

always the case. For what would happen if the passions were totally inflamed, and were not excised nor healed by the arguments?

#### Lecture 40 (513d1-515c4)<sup>748</sup>

40.1. 'But now recall' (513d1): since last time<sup>749</sup> I referred to the Thessalian women, it is worth explaining the practice, [saying] why people think wizards draw down the moon [at an eclipse], and why the ordinary people beat on bronze.<sup>750</sup> Note that an eclipse is nothing other than the privation of light. During this privation in particular, while it is dark, certain infernal demons wander abroad, since the world is without light. Then unholy and God-hating wizards cast spells to attract these demons. Hence the multitude believes that they draw down the moon. And since at such a time demons are among us, people beat on bronze, thereby casting off and driving the demonic interference away.

40.2. I have dealt with these things because you are not without ideas about these customs. Now let me come to the present topic. This is the starting point of the argument that the four celebrated men were not statesmen, and he employs the following syllogism in the second figure: 'Statesmen make the citizens upstanding, i.e. temperate and just, demagogues do not make citizens upstanding, therefore statesmen are not demagogues.' Those four, however, were demagogues, for they [worked] within a democracy.<sup>751</sup> If someone says 'Nevertheless they saved the citizens and urged them to refrain from committing injustice', reply 'That is not the

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<sup>748</sup> In lecture 40 Ol. touches on a topic from the previous lecture, before beginning Socrates' argument about the failures of the four great Athenian leaders. Much is said about the criteria of statesmanship, how the promotion of internal justice is insufficient, how relevant knowledge is needed, and how we may judge this knowledge. The dangers of dabbling in politics without this knowledge are emphasized.

<sup>749</sup> Literally 'the day before', possibly 'yesterday', but certainly a useful insight into procedure at an Alexandrian Platonist class, cf. 43.3.

<sup>750</sup> Demonic activity in the shadow of the moon is a traditional topic, e.g. Plut. *De Facie* 944ab, and cf. also *De Genio* 591c, which speaks of the effect of eclipses on disembodied souls. Cf. also Tac. Ann. 1.28, Pliny *NH* 2.12.9, Juv. *Sat.* 6.442, Aem. Paul. 17.264b. This is an interesting example of a scientific correction of a superstitious belief about an astronomical phenomenon side by side with lore about demons. Ol.'s reference to his motive for discussing demons, at the beginning of 40.2, may imply that his students showed more interest in the subject than he.

<sup>751</sup> The term 'demagogue' implies leadership of the sovereign people, which can only be a feature of democracies.

measure of statesmen, for even robbers abide by justice *towards each other*'.<sup>752</sup> Note that injustice itself cannot endure if there is no justice. For people need to observe justice regarding each other, for their mutual protection. So even robbers know in what cases they should assault and when not. You can hear them [saying] 'If we assault this man, he is strong and there is a chance he may kill us, so let us leave him alone'. In the same way these four also considered who were the stronger and who were the weaker, and they declined to wrong the stronger because they lacked the power, whereas they assaulted the weaker.<sup>753</sup>

40.3. So one should in every case be a statesman and aim for the good and criticize those of bad [psychic] constitution.<sup>754</sup> Hence in the *Laws* (633b-4b) [Plato] criticizes the Spartan during the discussion. For the Spartan said 'Our constitution is admirable, for we are continually engaged in hardships, exercises and training.' [Plato] replies 'You should pursue not only what is on the left but also what is on the right'. By 'left' he means painful things and by 'right' those that pertain to pleasure. Hence he says 'You should get used to pleasure too, so that the soul may become hardened to it. For then you will be more eager to shun low pleasures and accept good ones'.

Furthermore he criticizes bad pleasure, with an attack on the Cretans.<sup>755</sup> For they said 'We should be slaves to pleasure, for the gods frequently resort to it. And if Zeus', they say, 'took pleasure in Ganymede, then we also ought to imitate him'. [Plato] replies '[To justify] your disgraceful acts you have treated the myth as a factual account'. For this is a myth, since there could not be sexual union for a God, [least of all] unlawful union.<sup>756</sup> But through this

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<sup>752</sup> *Rep.* 1 351c. This is Ol.'s extended consideration of Socrates' criticism of the four democratic politicians, and his response to the polemic in their support by the the second sophistic orator Aelius Aristides.

<sup>753</sup> Implicit here is the comparison between fifth-century Athens, which displayed some justice internally, but subordinated justice to self-interest abroad, with a band of robbers who also display internal harmony and use discretion as to the objects of their injustice externally.

<sup>754</sup> A good example of Ol.'s explicit paralleling of soul and state, following the pattern of *Rep.*, with the support of *Grg.* 512e.

<sup>755</sup> Ol. goes on to deal with *Laws* 636b-d.

<sup>756</sup> Ol., in fact going well beyond what Plato says, criticizes the Cretans for cognitive as well as moral error: in defending their immoral acts by reference to the myth of Zeus and Ganymede, they treat a myth (*mythos*) as a factual account (*logos*) and thus reveal their inability to see the necessity of proceeding beyond the surface meaning of a myth to its concealed meaning.

[myth] it is signified that a certain Ganymede raised himself towards the divine, and so, it is said, he also dined with them and was their wine-bearer, meaning that he came to have an immaterial and divine constitution, free from any unpleasantness.

40.4. We should embrace a good [psychic] constitution. For there is no other way of becoming a statesman, unless we proceed through mathematics, and before that music and gymnastics, and hence little by little advance to a higher level. If someone says 'What? Is it not possible to become admirable without knowledge?' reply 'Yes, it is possible to acquire very great goodness and to please God just by living well. But it is impossible without knowledge to become a statesman.' For the statesman seeks to understand the men who are his subject-matter. If so, he seeks to understand also what is the essence of man, whether it is the body, or external things, or the soul. And when he discovers that it is the soul, again [he seeks to understand] what sort of soul. So he seeks to practice knowledge.<sup>757</sup> Socrates says this many times, but do not become confused. For sometimes he presents the argument syllogistically, sometimes in summary form, sometimes at length, in every case drawing us through his persistence toward the good. For it would be very welcome if, through his persistence, we could be affected by his words and overthrow the passions.

40.5. Seeking, then, to explain why they were not statesmen, he takes this as the first test: 'The statesman seeks to be knowledgeable about constitutional matters'. The second test, which asks 'What shows that a statesman is knowledgeable?', is not to be answered simply but is complex. It has not one but a number of answers, either from his predecessors or from his products.<sup>758</sup> 'From his predecessors', so that we may know whether he had teachers or made his own inquiries. For inquiry does not bring as much benefit as

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This employs standard late Neoplatonic doctrine concerning myth, 46.5 (though cf. 47.1, where Socrates treats his myth as a true account, and Callicles treats it as a myth). The offensive pleasure here is that of pederasty: Ol.'s attack on pederasty may reflect prevailing values shared with Christianity, and is invited by Plato's dismissal of homosexual acts as unnatural at *Laws* 636c-d: he makes no reference to more tolerant works such as *Smp.* or *Phdr.*

<sup>757</sup> Again the influence of the *Alc.* 129a-133e: our real self is not just the soul but the rational soul.

<sup>758</sup> Ol. presents four tests for being a teacher: one's own teacher, or (less good) one's own researches, one's output, one's pupils. This material is clearly drawn from *Laches* (184e-187b, chiefly 186a-c), a work which fails to appear at all in W.'s *Index Auctorum*.

teaching.<sup>759</sup> This is because in our ignorance the path from potentially to actually knowing requires another, who [knows] in actuality and whose duty it is to lead us to actuality. And the teacher is someone who knows in actuality. 'From his products' means either from achievements or from students. For it is from all of these that we recognize whether someone is knowledgeable or not. For if a man was blessed with a good teacher and made inquiries then he is bound to be knowledgeable.<sup>760</sup> But if he neither made inquiries nor had a teacher, where could he get knowledge from? Further, inquire whether achievements of his are reported. If someone professes architecture, inquire whether he produced achievements in the city. If he produced fine works—and they need to be fine, since it is possible to produce many things, but of very bad quality—then say he is knowledgeable. Similarly, if he did not produce achievements, but has excellent students, then also say he is knowledgeable.

Note that such a person seeks first to make himself orderly and then to make others likewise. For example, if someone is a doctor, he should first make himself healthy and then others likewise. Hence, as our own philosopher Ammonius points out,<sup>761</sup> Jacob used to say that a doctor should not be ill. So he must make himself healthy first, and then others likewise. If, however, nature has given him a poor physique, he should as far as possible strive by whatever means to bring it into good condition.

40.6. So Socrates says to Callicles 'If in complete ignorance of medicine we wanted to be doctors in the city, they will condemn us. For we are not equipped for it by teachers or as a result of

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<sup>759</sup> The contrast between inquiry and teaching slightly alters the emphasis of the *Laches*, where it is (independent) *discovery* which contrasts with (teacher-induced) learning. The present contrast is reminiscent of that between New Academic and Antiochian education in Cic. *Ac.* 2.60. It is given an Aristotelian slant by the presence of the notions of potentiality and actuality. One of Ol.'s regular themes is the authority of the teacher and the respect he is owed, cf. 2.10, 38.3.

<sup>760</sup> An optimistic view which contrasts strongly with Socrates' views on the scarcity of knowledge, and also those of the Stoics. It is impossible to envisage Ol. as one who spoke with any doubts about his own wisdom, especially as he clearly admired his teacher Ammonius.

<sup>761</sup> Note the pride in referring to his own teacher (even one not immune to criticism, 44.4). Ol. cites Ammonius again in a medical context, 42.6. We do not know who this Jacob was (an Alexandrian, perhaps, with a Jewish or Christian name, in contrast to the general Solon of Alexandria, referred to in Ammonius' words at 44.4). Ol. does not himself refer to contemporary Alexandrians. On medical persons at Alexandria, see Wilson (1983), 48-49.

inquiry, and from us neither products nor students are reported'. He questions Callicles most precisely and carefully.<sup>762</sup> Because, as I said, one should first care for oneself and then for others, he does not say 'Have you, Callicles, cared for yourself?' so as to avoid appearing to be reproaching him—for already [Callicles] had emphatically declared that he favoured intemperance—but, true to his teaching, Socrates applies this issue of *self*-concern to *himself*, and says 'But can I heal myself if I am ignorant of medicine?' As for the lesson that we should also heal *others*, he applies this to *Callicles*, acting with genuine concern and without reproach, and asking 'If people are going to make you a statesman, will you have the power to help them?' Let us take care that we do not lack this power.<sup>763</sup> The builder is respected who first builds a fine house for himself and then [fine houses] for his friends, whereas one who lacks that power is shunned. So too it is clear that something of the sort holds for the statesman, and that he should not [act] in a naive manner which relies on luck. For if a donkey or a horse is not nourished by any food at all but only by what is able to nourish it, then all the more the soul needs to be schooled by the right things and at the right time. For if 'the more you foster the impurities of the body the more you are going to harm it',<sup>764</sup> then all the more in the case of a soul that is soiled. For the richer you make a wretched soul, the unhappier you make it.

Hence we should nurture and train it little by little. For in pottery we do not first learn to make a wine-jar—for it is ridiculous to begin with great tasks—but the apprentice potter first shapes something simple, plates or suchlike, and later proceeds to wine-jars and larger objects. And first we should produce together with our teachers, and only after learning produce by ourselves too, for it is impossible not to make mistakes to begin with. That's why doctors too make mistakes to begin with, but in time experience becomes their teacher. Hence we should not rush straight to statesmanship either, but first become knowledgeable [about it]'. So as not to create problems for ourselves now, let us leave the argument

<sup>762</sup> Ol. argues that Socrates has chosen his examples in such a way as to recognize that concern for oneself naturally comes first (cf. the Stoic concept of *oikeiosis*), and also to demonstrate his genuine concern as to what may become of Callicles. This fits in with the theme that the statesman must see first to his own virtue, then make it his concern to make others virtuous.

<sup>763</sup> Reading σκοπῶμεν for σκοποῦμεν.

<sup>764</sup> Hippocr. *Aphor.* 2.10, also quoted at *In Alc.* 137.7-8, 226.7-9, *In Cat.* 10.7-8.



which maintains that those four were not statesmen, and return to it when Socrates himself refers to them.

40.7. **'To receive great wealth'** (514a2): observe that even Socrates wishes to receive money, but not a great deal. For there is in fact a need for the proper measure, for how can he live if he is poor? So the statesman should take from those who have more than they deserve and distribute to those in need.<sup>765</sup>

40.8. **'And reputable'** (514b8-c1): he calls 'reputable' not much-discussed people such as are now called reputable, but those who are [truly] worthy of note.<sup>766</sup>

40.9. **'What is Socrates' own bodily condition'** (514d6): observe how he refers the remark to himself, so as not to reproach Callicles.

40.10. **'Either slave or free man'** (514d8): one's reputation for a craft does not decline along with levels of fortune, but whether one is able to heal a slave or a free man, he is still a doctor. And in the *Phaedrus* (270b-c) [Plato] compares the true orator and the statesman to medicine. That is surely why he says 'If we should follow Hippocrates, one of the followers of Asclepiades' and 'as Hippocrates and true reason says'. He says this when comparing to medicine both the statesman and the true orator who should serve the statesman.

40.11. **'Has Callicles ever yet made any citizen better?'** (515a4): observe how he makes Callicles the example here and says 'Has Callicles made anyone better?'. He depicts Callicles as leader, and himself as follower, because he had already said 'I follow you, Callicles'.<sup>767</sup>

40.12. **'You're competitive, Socrates'** (515b5): because he does not know what to say he calls him competitive. But Socrates replies 'It is not out of competitiveness that I say this, but because I love the truth and want to understand this'.

40.13. **'I'll answer for you'** (515c4): because Callicles was unwilling to reply—for he had nothing to say, refuted by these

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<sup>765</sup> A redistributive political theory based on an Aristotelianizing correction of Socrates' not charging fees! This interpretation may have been encouraged by the Alexandrian professor's need for student contributions for his own income (perhaps in contrast to the better-endowed Athenian school).

<sup>766</sup> Ol. points out that ἐλλόγιμος, which implies that a person is much talked about, was previously used to imply that they *deserved* to be talked of.

<sup>767</sup> Socrates was directed towards politics by Callicles (487d, 515a1-3) and invited Callicles to show him the way forward (488a).

arguments—Socrates says ‘I answer on your behalf and say “Yes, we agree that the statesman does all these things”.’

#### Lecture 41 (515c4-517a6)<sup>768</sup>

41.1. ‘Then if this is what the good man should arrange’ (515c4): [Socrates’] present purpose is to show through this that those four celebrated men were not statesmen. Seeking to show this, he takes a single universal affirmative premise that has been agreed. It says ‘Statesmen ought to make the citizens upright’, that is the same as saying ‘temperate and just’. As this premise is agreed, he next derives the particular [conclusion]: ‘These men were not statesmen, for they did not make the citizens upright’. What makes it clear that they did not make the citizens upright? It is because no-one was grateful to them, but Themistocles was ostracized and in the end suffered what was said earlier (33.5), and the others too fell into irremediable ills, while Miltiades, who had rendered many benefits and had won the Persian War at Marathon, died in chains. So they did not make them upright, or else [the Athenians] would not have put an end to them so dishonourably. But if someone says ‘Yet they made Pericles general again after condemning him’, reply ‘Not by a genuine choice and in a grateful manner, but of necessity, because there was no one else who could help them’.<sup>769</sup>

41.2. Note that they were not statesmen since, although they were in a democratic city, they neither fled from the city nor changed it into an aristocracy. Yet if we lack the power to render [the city] some benefit, we must withdraw as to a fortress, since by remaining we do something similar to those who depart to a deserted spot with a variety of wild beasts and wish to tame them.<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>768</sup> In lecture 41 Ol. treats Plato's arguments that the Four were not statesmen and that they failed to turn the state into an ‘aristocracy’. The question raises several difficulties about the practical failures of Socrates and Plato with those they might have been expected to influence, which Ol. replies to at unusual length.

<sup>769</sup> Here we get Ol.'s main case against the Four's being statesmen: they did not earn the gratitude of the citizenry. Ol. will have to deal with the problem caused by Socrates' prosecution for his standing as a statesman shortly.

<sup>770</sup> The image of the frustrated politician trying to tame wild beasts in lonely places singlehandedly is drawn from *Rep.* 6 496d, as is that of withdrawal sheltering in a fortress. But the message is very different, perhaps

So since they remained they ought to have made [the city into] an aristocracy.

Plato urges us to achieve this by means of music and gymnastics.<sup>771</sup> Not, of course, this popular music [of ours]. But since we are raised with falsehoods from a tender age as we listen to myths of creation, he urges that certain songs be communicated to us. These are myths, but true ones, not false, [teaching] that God is good, that we must honour our parents and so on. By these means he brought people little by little towards the [right] constitution. If someone says 'But these are not myths but common notions, for that one should honour the gods is not a myth', reply 'He urged us to learn these things, not in a direct but in a Pythagorean and symbolic manner, yet his concealed messages are consistent with the common notions. So it is because these stories have been delivered in a concealed manner that he calls them myths'.<sup>772</sup>

41.3. Now that is what is said on this matter, and some have raised difficulties about it.<sup>773</sup> First, concerning Socrates, 'How is it that he himself lacked the power to reform Alcibiades and Critias?' Their second problem is this: 'If these men were not statesmen because they were treated badly and ungratefully then neither was Socrates a statesman, for he too was struck down'.<sup>774</sup> They also raise a problem about Plato, 'How did he lack the power to convince Dionysius the tyrant?'. In addition, they also say about Aristotle

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intended for Ol.'s own age, but masked under the guise of a particular attack on democracy. He can have no chance of altering the structure of political power in his favour. For other cases of this recurrent theme see 26.18, 32.4, 45.2.

<sup>771</sup> Music in this context means primarily poetry and the stories that it tells. Again Ol. resorts to *Rep.* to supplement his account. Material comes from 376e (music/gymnastics), 377a (false stories), etc.

<sup>772</sup> Ol. here anticipates the doctrine of myth and its allegorical content which will appear at lecture 46. The connexion between Pythagoreans and philosophical myth is also made at 29.4, 30.1, and 46.1.

<sup>773</sup> These problems have a long history; the first was certainly present in Polycrates' *Accusation of Socrates* (Xen. *Mem.* 1.2, Lib. *Ap. Soc.* 136); but Ol. has Aristides *Or.* 46D (=3Behr) in mind in every case: (1) 322.20-24D (=3.434 Behr); (2) 326.14-18D (=3.447Behr); (3) 304.7-312.4, cf. 324.20-22D (=3.3.377-400, cf. 3.440Behr); (4) 324.18-325.20D (=3.440-43Behr). Consequently, Lenz (1946), 104, claims that *τινες* refers only to Aristides; he is indeed the *opponent* of Ol. here, but there is no close attention to the text of his speech. The topic of Socrates' unsuccessful relationship with Alcibiades occurs in the *Alcibiades*-commentaries, Proc. *In Alc.* 85.17-86.7, Ol. *In Alc.* 26.22-27.2

<sup>774</sup> The criticism is scarcely intelligible but for Socrates' paradoxical claim to be a true practitioner of politics at 521d, which Aristides has made use of.

that even he disagreed with Plato, hence his wish, as Aristides says, to make his fortress the Lyceum and to introduce new doctrines.<sup>775</sup>

These are the difficulties. Let us resolve each of them. First, those concerning Socrates. In the first place Socrates made many people fine and good—Cebes, Plato, Aristotle and so on.<sup>776</sup> In the second place note that it is one thing to be a teacher and another thing to be a statesman, for a statesman is entrusted with the affairs of the city and is under an obligation to conduct them well. But what can the teacher do if his students do not obey him?<sup>777</sup> So Alcibiades did not follow the good advice he received, but that is nothing to do with Socrates. These four men, however, did not continually criticize the citizens.<sup>778</sup> In particular Alcibiades did not remain with Socrates long enough for the latter's words to have some impact on his soul. Doubtless this is what Isocrates refers to in his *Busiris* when he says '[Alcibiades], whom no-one ever saw being taught by [Socrates]', clearly because of the shortness of time.<sup>779</sup>

Note this too, that Alcibiades was not of bad character when a student of Socrates, but only later after he ceased to be a student.<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>775</sup> The standard late Neoplatonic view of Aristotle acknowledges little real difference from Plato, postulating a basic system much the same for both. Ol. makes it clear that he does not endorse Aristides' uncharitable view (shared for instance by the second century AD Platonist Atticus), but he does not counter it either.

<sup>776</sup> Ol. seems to suggest that Aristotle (b. 387BC) was old enough to have been taught by Socrates (d. 399BC). It is possible that Ol. is just wrong (cf. 0.9 with its strange chronology), or that he is referring to Socrates' indirect influence (for their lives did not overlap), or that the text is wrong (a misreading of an abbreviation for Aristippus, for instance). Plato's *Apology* includes a whole list of suitable 'pupils' of Socrates (33d-34a, cf. Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.48), but Ol. seems unaware of this.

<sup>777</sup> As often, one feels that Ol.'s remarks about the perquisites and responsibilities of the teacher have a personal significance.

<sup>778</sup> The implication is that Socrates criticized *persistently* and was not heeded, but that the statesmen only critized once, then said no more, cf. Ammonius at 32.2.

<sup>779</sup> Isoc. 11.5. Ol. assumes that Alcibiades had in fact been a formal pupil of Socrates, not understanding any other kind of relationship that might have obtained between them, and being strongly influenced by *Alc.*, which he regards almost as a historical document that witnessed Socrates' teaching.

<sup>780</sup> Agreeing with the theory of *Tht.* 150de according to which many make substantial progress while with Socrates, but leave too early and lose all that they have gained (cf. *Theag.* 130a2-4). Also relevant here is Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.24-25, which talks of the moral failures of Critias and Alcibiades when they no longer attempt to practice what Socrates taught.

Besides, Alcibiades did the things that Socrates had predicted. So we learned in the *Alcibiades* (132a) that Socrates said to him 'You have a fine natural endowment, but your passion for popularity is not good, and I am afraid you will come to an evil end'. So I have thoroughly demonstrated that Socrates was not to blame, seeing that even Alcibiades himself held Socrates in good repute and praised him.<sup>781</sup> So much concerning Alcibiades.

41.4. Critias was one of the thirty rulers, and it is because [Socrates] constantly rebuked them that they brought a flimsy charge against him and had him earmarked for death. The question 'How is it then that [Socrates] himself was put to death' is absurd. For *he* was put to death precisely because he rebuked everybody and regarded the truth as most dear, so that he met his death in an attempt to moderate them.<sup>782</sup> That is surely why [the Thirty] warned him 'Do not be caught with the young', but he replied 'Am I not then to converse with young shopkeepers? You are ashamed to say to me "leave the city" instead. For although at Athens I must rather mix with Megarians'.<sup>783</sup> Such was the frankness of speech of the man. So he despised them all and rebuked them and withdrew.<sup>784</sup> If someone asks 'How is it that he was a juror?'<sup>785</sup> reply 'In the first place we do not have this [as a fact], but if he did indeed act as a juror, then he did so not as a statesman but as a citizen. For he did not have the power to avoid *some* involvement with the toils

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<sup>781</sup> Ol. is thinking no doubt of *Symp.* 215a-222b, but perhaps also of *Prt.* 309b and 336d or of lost Socratic dialogues of Aeschines or Antisthenes; the point here is that Alcibiades, as pupil of Socrates, *did* show gratitude, unlike those who were led by the Four.

<sup>782</sup> Ol. may appear here to regard the Thirty as the agents of Socrates' prosecution, but the context shows he is following Xenophon *Mem.* 1.2, who holds that Socrates was in danger of being put to death by the Thirty anyway (1.2.37). If there is any historical confusion here it is probably due to the recorder.

<sup>783</sup> The story occurs in Aristides (46.324D=3.410Behr), and might be thought to come originally from Xenophon (*Mem.* 1.2.33-38). But while Xenophon mentions the shopkeepers, he does not have anything to say about exile or Megarians.

<sup>784</sup> The withdrawal accords with Ol.'s standard view of the true politician in non-ideal regime, 41.2 etc.

<sup>785</sup> W. refers to *Ap.* 32a-c (Socrates' account of his very modest engagement in political life) thus taking ἐδίκησε in the question in a broad sense to refer to any office relating to the judicial process and requiring the casting of a vote rather than in the sense of being a dikast. But Ol. seems to understand the suggestion in the narrower sense of being a juror, however, hence his doubt about the truth of the story.

of his fellow-citizens.' As a result there were many who grieved at his death.

41.5. It was surely because of Socrates' great fame that certain people came to study [in Athens]. And after his death, Isocrates, grieving, took the young, led them off to Anytos and Meletos and said 'Take them and teach them yourselves, since Socrates is no longer alive'.<sup>786</sup> So [Socrates] lived up to the statesman's life in every way.<sup>787</sup>

If someone says these four men were also immune to bribes and refrained from theft, that is no great point. For it is not sufficient for well-being to refrain from theft, but rather to promote the order of the soul in all matters, since [simply] to refrain from theft is nothing. An illustration: someone once said 'The ruler is good, for he does not steal', only to receive the excellent reply 'Well if he did steal, that would not even make him a good slave'. So this [difficulty] is of no account.<sup>788</sup>

41.6. That deals with Socrates. Now we must deal with Plato. As we have learned from the *Phaedo*, at his death Socrates said to his companions 'Reassure yourselves constantly by means of these arguments, to prevent your passions from taking control of you'. When they said 'Who will reassure us when you are gone?', Socrates said 'Greece is full of people, and so are the lands of foreigners. So do not hold back from spending money too to achieve some benefit, for it is a fine thing to spend money appropriately'.<sup>789</sup> Since [Socrates] said this, Plato attended to it. And when he heard that there were Pythagoreans in Sicily he departed in order to derive benefit from them. For he had derived benefit from Socrates only in ethical matters, which he received as foundations. For he

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<sup>786</sup> At D.L. 6.9-10 the same story is told of Antisthenes rather than Isocrates.

<sup>787</sup> Answering the claim in 41.3 that Socrates was not a statesman either.

<sup>788</sup> Ol. is led by his general desire to refute Aristides into an excursus. His point is that virtue does not manifest itself in the absence of bad deeds, but in positive promotion of what is good.

<sup>789</sup> *Phd.* 77e-78a, but it is a problem that *Phd.* follows the *Grg.* in the Iamblichan curriculum, and should not have been read in full before it. Does the 'we' not specifically include Ol.'s pupils, or have they had selections from works illustrating Socrates' life and conduct? This is plausible, as *Phd.* is treated as (in part at least) a historical document below (cf. *Alc.* in 41.3). Perhaps the teacher had also required the passage for protreptic purposes, in order to convince those interested that Greek philosophy was something appropriate to be spending their funds on. It is a favourite passage of Ol. (see note on 39.8).

was still young when Socrates died and had not yet grasped the deeper points of Socrates' arguments. That he was young is evident from his defence of Socrates. For he wanted to deliver a speech in defence of Socrates, and on ascending the podium said 'Though I am the youngest to speak here....', but he was not allowed to say any more, but as soon as he had said this everyone at once cried out 'Get down, get down'.<sup>790</sup>

41.7. So he went to Sicily and found the Pythagoreans practising top-quality mathematics, geometry and astronomy, and returned with the intention of mastering them himself. And then he went to Libya and in Cyrene he was taught geometry by Theodorus. From there he went to Egypt and mastered astronomy. And that he won honour as a student, it is unnecessary to say. Having become a master, then, he returned to Sicily, wishing to investigate the fiery craters of Etna and to meet the Pythagoreans.<sup>791</sup>

But on his arrival in Sicily he discovered that Dion was a true lover of philosophy, and honoured Plato for his divine character. This Dion had a sister, Aristomache, who was wife of the tyrant Dionysius, and she was a Syracusan. He also had another wife, a Locrian, for he was so unjust that in one day he married two wives, Aristomache, the sister of Dion, and the Locrian. Dionysius also had a brother, Leptines. Now Dion said to Plato 'Go and meet Dionysius, and you will likely convince him with your words to develop a temperate constitution and you will save whole cities'. And Plato went to meet [Dionysius] in deference to his friendship with [Dion]. Then Dionysius asked Plato 'Can you name a happy man?', thinking that Plato would say 'You', but Plato in fact said 'Socrates'. Then, because he was famous for his skilful judgments,

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<sup>790</sup> This passage is important for Ol.'s understanding of the relations between Socrates, Plato and the Pythagoreans. An early version of the story of Plato's visit to Italy appears in Philodemus *Academica* col. X 10ff., p. 165 Gaiser. The tale of Plato on the podium occurs in (Justus of Tiberias in) D.L. 2.41, anon. *Prol.* 3.21-25. The latter, though close to D.L. in other respects, has replaced 'youngest of ..' with 'a youth'. This may suggest that it represents a later stage in the telling of the story than does Ol.

<sup>791</sup> In *Alc.* 2.94-96, *Prol.* 4.11-13, cf. D.L. 3.18, which makes the desire to see Etna the motive of the first Sicilian visit. Note the way that Ol. makes the journey to North Africa depend on essentially Pythagorean motives, as if wishing to exclude any distinctively Egyptian (or other non-Greek) element from Plato's education; contrast anon. *Prol.* 4, where the Pythagorean wisdom is derived itself from Egypt. Sometimes it takes an effort to recall that Ol. is lecturing in Egypt. Bowersock (1990) seems in agreement with Chuvin that 'Greek literature of the period almost never mentions Egypt'.

Dionysius said to Plato 'Giving judgment is the greatest good', but Plato said 'Not so: for giving judgment is like seamstresses, i.e. women who darn. Just as they do not produce clothing that is sound and secure, but repair clothing that has been damaged, so too one who gives judgments does not produce men without offence, but repairs those who have offended'. Once again he asked Plato a question: 'Do you not think Heracles was happy?' Plato replied 'If he was the sort of man that the myths suggest, then he simply was not happy. But if he lived a virtuous life, then he was a truly happy man'.<sup>792</sup>

41.8. Now since he did not spare his feelings but gave him excellent advice, Dionysius became angry and heated. And some say that Dion, thinking Dionysius was wicked, took care that he should not plot against [Plato] and requested Polles, a Spartan general, to convey him to Athens by night so as to escape detection. Others say that Dionysius himself instructed Polles secretly to deport him. In any event he was deported and Polles conveyed him to Aegina. Then Polles realized his countrymen were prisoners in Athens, and said 'If they do not release them, neither shall I release you'. But at that same time a certain Annikeris appeared. He was on his way to compete at the Olympics, and when he saw Plato and realized, he freed him from his chains for a ransom of twenty minae—to his great credit. Later Plato sought to repay him the twenty minae but he refused to accept them, saying 'I considered it a greater glory to free you than my victory at the Olympics'.<sup>793</sup>

While this was going on, the tyrant Dionysius died, leaving a single son by each of his wives. They fell out over who should rule, for the wives did not know with which of them Dionysius first lay, so that the son of the first might rule. For Dionysius deliberately arranged to keep it secret whom he lay with first. Aristomache thought that her brother Dion was scheming against her son and she became hostile to him. Now the son of the Locrian

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<sup>792</sup> Ol.'s source for these anecdotes is ultimately Plutarch *Dion* : 5.1-4 for the honouring of Plato; 3.3-4 for Aristomache and the Locrian woman (Doris). For another, rather different, account cf. Ol. *In Alc.* 2.97-113. Cf. also D.L. 3.18, Philodemus *Acad.* col. X 9-17, pp.165-66 Gaiser.

<sup>793</sup> For Polles' part in the events see Plut. *Dion* 5.5-7, *In Alc.* 2.118-127 (which confirms that τίμη here means honour rather than expense), D.L. 3.19-20, Aristides 3.382-5Behr (= 46, pp. 305ff. Dindorf). The story is related to the version of Neanthes at Philodemus *Acad.* cols.2-3, pp.174-5 Gaiser.



wife became tyrant, and he also was called Dionysius. Dion, who was on friendly terms with him, said to him 'If you want to rule in an orderly manner, send for Plato, and he will teach you in person'. So they sent for him. And Plato consulted influential people, [asking] whether they desired him to make the trip. His companions approved, because they wanted him to demonstrate his theories by putting them into practice, and the statesmen agreed because they wanted all the cities to be well organized. So he departed.

And when Dionysius the younger learned that he had arrived, he ordered sacrifices and festivals at the good news. And he was taught in due fashion. And there was ash and dirt in his palace, not from his feet but from his geometry. But since he was unsuccessful at it, certain flatterers warned him, saying 'Dion seeks to scheme against you, so put an end to these things and secure your hold on your father's throne'. And indeed he succumbed to the flatterers and despised the teachings, and hence Plato withdrew since he loved the truth wherever he was.<sup>794</sup>

41.9. So much concerning Plato. Concerning Aristotle we must point out that in the first place he in no way disagrees with Plato, except in appearance.<sup>795</sup> In the second place, even if he does disagree, that is because he has benefited from Plato. For [Plato] says in the *Alcibiades* 'Unless you hear yourself speaking, do not put your trust in the words of another'. And again in the *Phaedo* he says 'Care little for Socrates, but greatly for the truth'.<sup>796</sup> So Plato himself urges us not to believe him indiscriminately, but to inquire [for ourselves]. That is surely why the philosopher Ammonius says 'I may have acted wrongly, but when someone once said something and declared "Plato said so", I answered "He did not mean it like that, and in any event—may Plato forgive me—even if did mean it like that I am not persuaded, unless he added a demonstrative argument."' And that Aristotle revered him as a teacher is evident from his having written a whole work in his praise. For he sets out his life and praises him lavishly. But not

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<sup>794</sup> The source is Plut. *Dion* 13.1-4.

<sup>795</sup> The agreement of Aristotle and Plato (with Aristotle as introductory) is perfectly standard doctrine within late Neoplatonism, and the justification for the extensive study of Aristotle which Ammonius inspired, but it is a view which goes back beyond even Middle Platonism to Antiochus of Ascalon.

<sup>796</sup> *Alc.* 114e, *Phd.* 91c.

only did he compose an encomium in his praise, but also in the elegies addressed to Eudemos he writes in Plato's praise as follows:

Coming to the fair plain of Cecropia  
 He piously founded an altar of holy friendship  
 To a man whom it is not right for the wicked even to praise.  
 He alone or first of mortals clearly showed  
 From his own life and the manner of his arguments  
 That a man becomes good and happy at the same time.  
 But now no one is able any longer to grasp these things.<sup>797</sup>

41.10. **'Then if this is what the good man should'** (515c4-5): since what I have said so far is incomplete, I must add this about Plato.<sup>798</sup> There existed the celebrated orators Isocrates and Demosthenes and Lycurgus. But Isocrates was [Plato's] contemporary, whereas Demosthenes and Lycurgus were his students. Now if Demosthenes praised Plato, how should we regard the nonsense of Aristides? For Demosthenes wrote to Heracleodorus, who had studied with Plato for a short while, but then had fallen by the wayside and come to despise arguments. Demosthenes rebuked him and said 'Are you not ashamed to despise the teaching and the arguments that you heard from Plato?' And again Philiscus when writing the life of Lycurgus says 'Lycurgus was great and set right many things which it would not have been possible for anyone who had not heard the arguments of Plato to set right'.<sup>799</sup> We must also cite the nice remark made by one of the philosophers, that Aristides does not realize that he is contradicting himself.<sup>800</sup> For if Aristides himself says that Demosthenes was the image of Hermes,<sup>801</sup> and Demosthenes praises Plato, then all the more divine is Plato. Hence the story that Demosthenes was listening to Plato and praising his style, when one of his companions cuffed him for not attending to the substance of the lessons.

<sup>797</sup> Fr. 650 Rose3, and Fr. 673 Rose3 = *Carmina* fr. 2 Ross.

<sup>798</sup> Ol. is so anxious to answer Aristides that he is prompted to take up at the beginning of the *lexis* matters which he thinks should have been said in the course of the *theoria*. For other afterthoughts see 12.11, 13.10.

<sup>799</sup> Cf. Plut. *Vit. Or.* 871b, D.L. 3.46.

<sup>800</sup> Here we have explicit reference to an earlier Platonist critic of Aristides, indicating that Ol.'s rebuttal is a traditional line. It is unclear, however, whether that earlier material was within a *Grg.* commentary, another Platonist text such as Porphyry's lost *Against Aristides* (see Suda), or part of ongoing polemic within the rhetorical schools.

<sup>801</sup> *Or.* 46, 398.1-3D = 3.663Behr, a quotation transferred by Ol. to Socrates at *In Alc.* 190.14-19.

41.11. So much about Plato. [Socrates] says that those four were not statesmen for this reason, that they wrongly remained at the citizens' disposal. For if they came upon them wild, they should have made them tame and just, or else, if they came upon them tame, they should have kept them like that or even extended their tameness. But in fact they became even wilder. Therefore they were not statesmen. For in the case of a rider too, if he comes upon wild horses, he makes them tame. For if he makes them wild instead of tame, then he suffers harm, for they throw him off. So just as a man who raises asses or horses ought not to attend to their beauty but to making them tame, so all the more in the case of men we should attend to mildness. So he says that these four generals were good, because they saved them at all. And note that he makes this claim long before Aristides. But on the other hand they did not employ true rhetoric, for then they would not have been banished. Observe then that [Socrates] also recognizes true rhetoric, the kind which Aristides did not even dream of speaking about but [only] about popular rhetoric.

So Socrates says that these four were idle and craven and wordy and greedy. Let us examine what each of these means. He says they were *idle*, because when the Spartans attacked and invited them to a land-battle, they did not agree to fight in that way but turned to fighting at sea. And they saved the city like good generals, but not like good statesmen. For Plato bids us always and everywhere to take our stand with the soul and to strive for its salvation. And if violence summons us, [then Plato bids us] to assist ourselves with our body, and if there is still greater violence to turn to spear and javelin, and if the danger is really extreme, then to turn to horseback, but never to ships.<sup>802</sup>

41.12. And Homer also makes this point when he introduces Odysseus the clever one saying to Agamemnon

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<sup>802</sup> Reliance on ships was the strategy of Pericles (approved by Thucydides, 2.65), as earlier by Themistocles in the Persian War too (Herodotus 7.141-42). Plato's critique of these tactics is probably inferred from *Laws* 8 829-835, where virtue is the state's source of well-being and first line of defence against injury; however its citizens must prepare for war, firstly by athletic contests, secondly (and less often) by light-armed contests (using moderately dangerous missiles, 830de), and finally on horseback. Naval warfare is not mentioned, but this fits well with Plato's prejudice against maritime power and naval defences, including the readiness of navies to turn tail (*Laws* 4 706-707). Ol. or a source has fleshed all this out into an ethical theory concerning appropriate levels of self-defence.

'Son of Atreus, what word has escaped the fence of your teeth?'

and so forth, in which he urges 'Do not drag the curved ships to the sea, let us not become a joy to our enemies'.<sup>803</sup> Hence we should shun sea-battles, first because [sailors] do not fight with enthusiasm, but if they see some cheap trick available to them they resort to flight by boat, and their warfare is profitless. Second, because not even those who wish to engage in combat as they ought are able to act as autonomous agents, but only at the will of others. For they are the slaves of many toils, waves, ships, winds and suchlike. Third, because, if they are victorious, then the statesman does not know whom to honour as the conqueror. For it is unclear whether the marines fought well or the helmsmen trained and equipped them well. So for all these reasons we should not turn to fighting at sea.

If someone says 'How is it then that when Apollo was asked how they ought to fight, his oracle replied that it was by fighting a sea-battle?'<sup>804</sup> reply that he was asked how they were to be saved, but not how they were to be saved *well*, so that the aim of the oracle and of the statesman are not the same thing. For God by his very being presides over well-being too, whereas the statesman must strive to save his subjects well as far as is possible. But if those who fought in the sea-battle at Salamis were saved, it is no great thing even for the small contingent to be victorious by accident. Hence we should everywhere take a stand and not flee but imitate the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylae. For they stood their ground and fought in the face of countless hordes, and although they were killed—their bodies at least—nevertheless their souls were courageous because they stood their ground against so many.

So much then for their idleness. They were *craven* because they shut themselves up in their walls and did not emerge sooner. They were *wordy* because Pericles was the first to transfer the islanders' law-suits to Athens, so that the Athenians might be able to have their say. So for example the comic dramatists say that cicadas sing for two months, whereas the Athenians are in court

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<sup>803</sup> The first quotation is *Il.* 14.83, appearing here because lines 96-102 appeared in *Laws* 4, 706d, where Plato tackles the evils of training the city's leaders in sea-warfare. This second Homeric quote is from an unrelated passage at *Il.* 2.165.

<sup>804</sup> I.e. at Salamis, Herodotus 7.141-42.

the whole time.<sup>805</sup> And they were *fond of gain* because they contrived tribute for their sustenance. This took place for the sake of profit.

41.13. **'The people with torn ears'** (515e8): he is either speaking about the Spartans, because they boxed one anothers' ears in the gymnasia, or referring to those who were unable to make their ears available and listen to what was being said.<sup>806</sup>

41.14. **'They convicted him of theft'** (516a1): [Socrates] begins with the less serious faults and ends with the graver ones. So he begins with theft either because it was less serious, or because Pericles was familiar to him and he begins with the more familiar.

41.15. **'Or butt'** (516a7): i.e. 'attacking with their horns'. So if we welcome men who tame irrational animals and we honour doctors who heal bodies, how then would these orators, if they really made men tame, not have won a reputation? But Miltiades the Marathon victor—and the epithet 'of Marathon' enhanced his reputation—died in chains.<sup>807</sup> And his son Cimon would have met a similar fate, had not his sister Elpinice,<sup>808</sup> who was very beautiful, given herself in marriage to a certain Callias, a man of fabulous wealth, and by obtaining a ready supply of money and paying her father's fine rescued him.

41.16. **'And but for the prytanis'** (516e1): for the prytanis saved him.

41.17. **'We don't know of anyone'** (517a1): 'we don't know' is a fine touch. For it would not be absurd if statesmen had existed earlier or did exist somewhere else unknown to them. So for example Timaeus the Pythagorean ruled in a statesmanlike fashion in Italy.

41.18. **'Nor flattering rhetoric'** (517a6): note he says explicitly that they were not flatterers. So Aristides makes a vain accusation

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<sup>805</sup> A reference to Ar. *Birds* 39-41, also used at 11.3, again ascribing the sentiment to comic poets in general. The whole passage has the feel of being part of some rhetorical set-piece, with the fifth century figures and their tactics as the topic for debate.

<sup>806</sup> Ol. is perhaps giving as alternatives a literal and an allegorical interpretation.

<sup>807</sup> See Plut. *Cim.* 4.3 for Miltiades' death; he owed 50 talents at the time and this meant trouble for Cimon.

<sup>808</sup> Plut. *Cim.* 4.5-7; both she and Cimon were young at the time; Cimon was accused of having an incestuous relationship with her, but this is suppressed by Ol.; she married Callias (who had, notoriously, inherited the largest fortune in Athens) in order to obtain the money required by Cimon.

against him. But even if Aristides had only intended this as a practice piece, he would have been defaming a man of such greatness on a badly-aimed charge.<sup>809</sup>

#### Lecture 42 (517a-519b2)<sup>810</sup>

42.1. 'But no, Socrates—surely no-one now will achieve such works' (517a7): Callicles resembles Homer's Sisyphus.<sup>811</sup> For just as the poet has him push up the stone at one moment and let it go down at the next, so too Callicles at one moment agrees with Socrates when compelled to do so, and then at another time slips back. Hence he says 'Those orators were excellent'. But Socrates says 'I do not criticize them as *generals*.<sup>812</sup> In fact I praise them and say they were marvellous generals. But they were servants and not statesmen. For the doctor has his servants, e.g. publicans for [the supply of] fine wine, and goatskin-dealers, because the body insists on being warmed, and apothecaries, and similarly the trainer has his cooks and such like. So too the statesman has his servants. And the service that cooks and apothecaries render trainers and doctors is akin to that which doctors and trainers render the statesman—for they also perform a service. So we praise the doctor who heals a killer or adulterer<sup>813</sup> *qua* doctor, but not *qua* statesman. For the statesman would rather have ordered him to be done away with as a killer, and not to be healed. So too we praise

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<sup>809</sup> The crux of Ol.'s dispute with Aristides is over whether or not Plato accused the celebrated four of being flatterers. Cf. Aristides *Or.* 46, 351.9-355.22D (=3.513-532Behr); cf. 33.3 above.

<sup>810</sup> In lecture 42 Ol. continues his defence of Plato on the charge of slandering the Four, also giving a limited defence of the Four themselves. Aristocracy is defended as a system imitating the governance of the universe, and it is argued that aristocracy can be equally the rule of a single person or of a few.

<sup>811</sup> Cf. 45.1 below.

<sup>812</sup> It is unlikely that Ol. has the political office of *strategos* in mind here, but rather the purely military sense. For (military) generals as servants of the politicians see *Euthd.* 290b-d, in a wider context (288d-292e), which has apparently influenced Ol.'s overall theory of a hierarchy of crafts. Cf. also *Euthd.* 281c, *Meno* 87c.

<sup>813</sup> The law on adultery in classical Athens, as often in patriarchal societies intent on maintaining purity of citizen blood, was severe, and permitted the husband to kill an adulterer caught in embarrassing circumstances with his wife (Lys. 1). However, Ol. is giving an example not in the original, so the treatment of adulterers on the same level as murderers may reflect contemporary, Christian-influenced values.

these people for saving the citizens, but not *qua* statesmen. For health is not sufficient for well-being, as there are also many cases of people using their health to their detriment.' So even before Aristides he too praised them *qua* generals. But when he says they were 'fulfillers of desire', it is surely not *qua* flatterers or shameful people—the desire was for health rather than good.<sup>814</sup> For we desire both to live and to be healthy. So they fulfilled this object of desire for them, the desire for physical preservation.

42.2. The following will make it clear that there should not be democracy but rather aristocracy. Note that not only man, but also the city, is a universe in miniature. So if the city is a universe in miniature, men should resemble the universe. For a city, as Demosthenes also says (18.88), is not institutions but people. He says 'When I speak of the city, I mean you'. So we should imitate the entire universe, and in that entire universe there is a single ruler. Who is this? It is God, seeing that

No good thing is the rule of many Lords; one Lord may there be.

Hence it should not be a multitude of ordinary people who rule, but one prudent and true statesman. If somebody says 'But this is monarchy, not aristocracy, and that is not the same thing', reply as the philosopher Ammonius did, 'Let him feel your fist; don't deign to speak. It is the same thing, seeing that Plato said in the *Republic* that the ruler needs to be one either in number or in life.<sup>815</sup> So even if the number of aristocrats is many, they are one in their life, since they have all things in common.'<sup>816</sup> Democracy is ineffective in all cases, and a man who belongs to a democratically governed state needs a God who would deliver him from the

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<sup>814</sup> W. realizes that there is something amiss with the text which reads 'desire which is pleasant but not good', for this would indeed make them flatterers. He suggests emending 'good' to read 'base', but this does not help the argument to flow. Rather we should emend 'pleasant' (ἡδεια), which is an odd description of the desire rather than its fulfilment, to 'for health' (ὑγιαίνω): the contrast is between the preservation of a physically healthy life and the promotion of a morally virtuous life.

<sup>815</sup> *Rep.* 4 445d-e; note that it is again Ammonius who has inspired a reference to *Rep.* 4 (cf. 32.2); the fact that he is known primarily for his Aristotelian exegesis may also be relevant as the quotation of *Iliad* 2.204 is unlikely to be independent of Aristotle's famous use of it in *Met.* 12.10.

<sup>816</sup> Note how Ol. supports the elaborate Platonist parallel of universe (cosmos), city and individual (universe in miniature, microcosmos) with quotes from Demosthenes, Homer, and Plato, and a vivid reminiscence of Ammonius.

greatest evils, as Socrates was protected by God and remained godlike and more hardened to it.<sup>817</sup>

Because [Plato] compares [the four democratic leaders] with Thearion the baker, Mithaecus the cook and Sarambus the publican, Aristides reproaches him.<sup>818</sup> But nobody criticizes Homer when he presents Ajax, 'the bravest' as he said, 'after Pelion's lordly son' as a bit like an ass—a lazy ass too. For he says<sup>819</sup>

As when an ass at the furrow...

And again

... upon whom clubs are broken.

So we should not reproach him for the comparison. For he means that just as those people were splendid because they provided as well as they could what was required,<sup>820</sup> so too these four persons are praiseworthy as saviours, but not as statesmen.

42.3. **'Well, now we're doing a ridiculous thing, you and I in our discussion'** (517c4-5): [Socrates] includes himself in the joke because of his modest character, or because he wishes to show that if a student behaves ridiculously the teacher is also insulted for it.<sup>821</sup>

42.4. **'or a tanner'** (517e1-2): The word 'tanner' is purer Attic, since the hides, i.e. dead bodies and skins, are softened.<sup>822</sup>

42.5. **'their original flesh as well'** (518c7): i.e. 'the natural flesh'. For great indulgence and excessive fat become the cause of sickness and tend rather to destroy the flesh.

42.6. **'who were responsible for the ills'** (518d7): it is particularly when doctors fail, as the philosopher Ammonius says, that the sick say 'Who brought me these doctors?' And [the sick man] criticizes

<sup>817</sup> 26.26 and 40.3 tend to confirm this as the sense of *στομοῦσθαι* here.

<sup>818</sup> Aristides *Or.* 46, 202.16-20, 257.2-5D (= 3.127, 250Behr). On the remainder of 42.2 see Lenz (1946), 112-9; he explains the ways in which Ol. varies the Platonic terminology in describing Mithaecus as *ὄψοποιός*, and how the Homeric quotations have been selected. The word 'bravest' in the quotation was restored by Maas (1938) even before Lenz.

<sup>819</sup> Homer, *Il.* 11.558-9, contrasted with a more flattering description at *Od.* 11.469-70 and 24.17-18.

<sup>820</sup> W. ignores Lenz' closely argued claims for a corrupt text here (1946, 118), and we feel that the MS text should be translated.

<sup>821</sup> For Ol.'s sensitivity to the situation of the teacher in these chapters, cf. 40.7, 41.3, 6, 43.2.

<sup>822</sup> Reading *δέχονται* for *ἔχονται* since an etymology is clearly required for the final part of *σκυτοδεψός*. *σκῦλα* might conceal *σκῦλη*, though *σκῦτη* would be preferable. The comparison is with *σκυτοτόμος* in 517e1.



them though they are not at all responsible, and praises those who fed him of old and fattened up his body, not realising that they and not the doctors were the cause of his sickness. At this point [Socrates] refers to doctors on the assumption that they are not flatterers who promote sickness, but come after the sickness. But if, from their own desire to eat, they encourage someone to eat excessively and then he gets sick, not even then are the doctors responsible for the suffering, but they have aided and abetted it. For why did that person ever have put his trust in their flattering?<sup>823</sup>

42.7. **‘But that it’s swelling’** (518e4): since it is beneath the surface the problem causes swelling and is exposed only with time, and they do not realize that this condition had been fostered for a long period.

42.8. **‘and that sort of rubbish’** (519a3): i.e. ‘all such superfluities’. For while rubbish is [generally] superfluous *talk*, everything superfluous is rubbishy too. Hence Socrates calls whatever is superfluous ‘rubbish’.

42.9. **‘and perhaps they’ll seize on you’** (519a7): ‘They will abuse you on the grounds that they are blameless’. Here [Socrates] does not mention Miltiades. For he showed better judgment than the others, and it was not at sea but on land that he triumphed.<sup>824</sup>

### Lecture 43 (519b-521a)<sup>825</sup>

43.1. **‘But it is a senseless thing I see’** (519b2-521a1): as evidence that those four [democratic leaders] did not make the citizens good and fine Socrates uses the fact that they were not thanked by them but were hated and their work was not received with gratitude. Callicles and his followers perhaps might say ‘That is nothing

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<sup>823</sup> Ammonius is often cited in medical contexts, 32.2, 40.5, and in general medicine and philosophy were growing closer during this period (Westerink, 1964). The thought here is that doctors have to think about how they will eat, and sometimes become parasites, dining with their patients. Flattery is a typical attribute of the comic ‘parasite’, which literally means somebody who feeds at somebody else’s meal. Here we have a familiar Platonic distinction between the true cause (αἰτία) and the accessory (συναίτια), cf. *Tim.* 46c-e.

<sup>824</sup> Ol. thinks of Miltiades as the victor of the land battle at Marathon, and thus distinguishes him from the others, having inherited Plato’s prejudice against naval power (cf. 41.11), e.g. *Laws* 4 704a-707d.

<sup>825</sup> In lecture 43 Ol. develops the theme of the ingratitude of the people to the Four, comparing it with other cases of ingratitude of client to professional, including that of pupil to philosopher.

against *them*. For this a mark of the citizens' idiocy and ingratitude, not that of these [four]. Similarly God too bestows his favours plentifully, and if the impious and the God-hating are ungrateful, then it is they who are worthy of blame, not God. So in this case too we should blame the ungrateful citizens, not the benefactors'.

Socrates resolves this difficulty by speaking as follows: 'There is a difference in the measures of beneficence. For benefit is rendered either to the soul or to the body or to externals. So if someone is rendered a benefit consisting of money but later on is ungrateful to his benefactor, we should in fact not blame the benefactor but the recipient for being ungrateful. Similarly if a doctor benefits the body and makes it healthy, but his patient does not pay a fee nor show gratitude, we should blame him, not the doctor. If, on the other hand, someone proposes to benefit the soul, but the person whose soul is benefited is ungrateful, then we should also blame the one who professed to benefit the soul, for it is clear that he did not do what he professed. For had he [truly] benefited the soul, he would in no way have suffered ingratitude. For this is just what the one whose soul was benefited could not bear, to commit injustice and be seen as insensitive to him who benefited the soul. So it is clear that he was of no benefit. For if a doctor professes to heal something, but does not heal but rather [produces] the opposite and extends the suffering, then he receives no gratitude from the patient, and with reason receives no gratitude, because he did not do what he professed.

43.2. So too these four received no gratitude because they did not do what they professed. For had they made the souls [of the citizens] upright, they would not have been rewarded with ingratitude'.

Diogenes saw a child misbehaving and struck the tutor. For if he had been prepared to pay attention to him, [the child] would not have misbehaved. So too with these [four]. Since the people were ungrateful, they should be blamed for not being statesmen. For if they had nurtured them as they should, they would have given willing thanks of their own accord. So too students who are aware they are being benefited do not have to hear their teachers telling them to bring fees, but rush on their own initiative to support them and display gratitude.<sup>826</sup>

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<sup>826</sup> The reference to Diogenes and the child appears to come from the same source as Plut. *Mor.* 439d = Diogenes VB 386 Giannantoni. Ol.

43.3. Let this suffice on that matter. Because someone asked last lecture,<sup>827</sup> ‘What is aristocracy anyway?’ we say ‘That [constitution] in which the best [element] rules, that is, reason’. Our soul has three parts—for it has reason, temper, and appetite—and when reason rules, the best constitution is produced. An aristocracy is produced when the best part of us rules, I mean reason. If temper rules, timocracy is produced, and if appetite [rules], it is either money-loving or pleasure-loving: if money-appetite rules, it leads to an oligarchy, for it is the few that possess money; if pleasure-appetite, then it is either lawful or unlawful. If the lawful [pleasure-appetite rules], it leads to democracy; if the unlawful, it leads to tyranny.

43.4. **‘Lays hands on any of the political men’** (519b4-5): those that are not statesmen, but are regarded as statesmen.

43.5. **‘You’ve really forced me to be a mob-orator’** (519d5-6): Callicles said earlier ‘You are a mob-orator, Socrates’. Socrates now says ‘You’ve made me into a real mob-orator. For I say everything since you give no answers’. Of this truth, that the teacher should not talk about fees<sup>828</sup>—for always, if the student is benefited, he does not commit injustice, and if he commits injustice he has not been benefited—of this truth, then, there is an indication in the *Alcibiades*. He had for a long time been avoiding Socrates, but when he appreciated the benefits, he was so grateful that without compulsion he said ‘Now we have swapped roles, for earlier you were my lover, whereas now you seem to be the beloved, and I the lover’.<sup>829</sup>

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interestingly (and characteristically) draws a comparison with gratitude and payment for the teacher (as again at 43.8)—despite his explicit caution about the impropriety of a teacher speaking about fees, cf. 43.5. On Ol.’s frequent references to the teaching context, and hints of the importance of payment (cf. 40.7) see general introduction, 15-17. The *In Alcibiadem* (140-41) shows that strictly speaking the philosophical practice is still to avoid charging fees in the way that a tradesman would.

<sup>827</sup> Literally ‘the day before’, possibly ‘yesterday’, but certainly a useful insight into procedure at an Alexandrian Platonist class; a similar reference is made at 40.1. The question implies that the student had not read the *Republic*, even though Ol. uses a great deal of illustrative material from that work. The answer is very compressed—perhaps an indication of the summariness of our text. Other descriptions of aristocracy occur at 42.2 (aristocracy and monarchy) and 46.1 (aristocracy is Pythagorean).

<sup>828</sup> These remarks are directed towards 519c3-d1, the subject about which Socrates (in Ol.’s eyes) had been talking like a mob-orator.

<sup>829</sup> Ol. seems to have in mind the depiction of Alcibiades’ pursuit of Socrates in the *Symposium*, particularly the role reversal of 222b. The roles of lover and beloved are not mentioned by Alcibiades at *Alc.* 135d7-10, though

43.6. **'But you because of your ignorance'** (520a8): out of a sense of shame in the presence of Gorgias, Socrates said nothing against sophistry. But Callicles railed at it, without any sense of shame. It differs from rhetoric in that sophistry is concerned with the universal, whereas the other is concerned with particulars.<sup>830</sup>

43.7. **'Then if someone removed this very thing, injustice'** (520d4): in the other cases, it is reasonable, in the event of ingratitude to the doctor or the tutor, to blame the ungrateful ones. But if a benefactor of the soul is treated unjustly by the one he is benefiting, then we should blame the benefactor himself for not delivering benefit. For this is what he professed to teach, that one should not commit injustice. That is what it is to benefit the soul. So if he committed injustice, he had not benefited; for had he benefited, he would never have committed injustice.<sup>831</sup>

43.8. **'How to be as good as possible'** (520e2-3): Aristotle divides the practical [sphere] into the ethical, the domestic and the constitutional. Observe that Plato anticipates Aristotle. For by saying 'as good as possible' he signifies the ethical, and by what follows the other two. For by 'and how best to govern one's own house' he signifies the domestic, and by 'and the city' the constitutional. One who learns these things would not be ungrateful to his teacher: rather the beneficiary would be keen to repay his teacher.<sup>832</sup>

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Socrates mentions both his own love and Alcibiades' reciprocal love at e1-3. Ol. makes nothing of the passage in his commentary on the *Alcibiades*.

<sup>830</sup> Ol. often sees a connection between character and dialectical tactics. For Ol.'s handling of the distinction between rhetoric and sophistry, see 13.2.

<sup>831</sup> A typical example of pedagogic repetition, where Ol. repeats in a *lexis* material covered at greater length in the *theoria*.

<sup>832</sup> A characteristic example of the Platonist perspective on Aristotelian and Platonic harmony, with Aristotelian technical distinctions already anticipated untechnically by Plato, cf. 3.7, 22.3, 31.8. The ethical concerns one's conduct, the domestic sphere the management of one's household and business affairs, and politics the management of the city. The three-fold division is standardly invoked in Alexandrian commentaries: cf. Amm. *In Isag.* 15, 2-3; Elias *In Isag.* 31, 28-9; David 74, 12-75; Ps.-El. 22, 3-11.

Lecture 44 (521a2)<sup>833</sup>

44.1. 'Then define for me what kind' (521a2): we should also deal with difficulties that arise, to stop them seeming to be of some consequence and disturbing the soul. There were difficulties that concerned Lycurgus and Theseus, and it has been asked 'Were they statesmen, since the historians speak of them as the victims of an evil death, as if they were not very great?' We say this is false, for such things are not said about Lycurgus, but instead admirable things. In the first place, the Pythian oracle endorsed him as a man of divine constitution,<sup>834</sup> and there is also much additional evidence that he was a statesman. In the first place his brother died, leaving a son who was king, and again when he died, he left his wife pregnant, who made it clear to Lycurgus 'If you wish, I will destroy the foetus and you can be king'. But he was very upset with her and urged her to set the baby, after its birth, on the king's throne. And everyone admired his justice.<sup>835</sup>

44.2. In addition to this, [Lycurgus] himself was king of Sparta when the sons of Heracles returned to Messene and Argos and Sparta.<sup>836</sup> And the government of two of these, Messene and Argos, was destroyed, but that of Sparta survived, since it was constituted according to Plato's rules. For Plato recommends that not all in the city should be slaves, since this will lead to hatred towards the rulers, but neither should all be free, since then they will not

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<sup>833</sup> In lecture 44 Ol. confines himself to the *theoria*, as there is no passage as such that is being commented on. The lecture is a digression, and does not refer to the *lemma* from 521a, as lecture 45 does. It is not clear who raised these difficulties, perhaps a student pursuing the implications of 'concerning the men of old' in 519b3, or perhaps they are traditional. They do not pertain directly to the Platonic text, save that they are further examples of statesmen wronged. Ol.'s sources are Plutarch's lives of Theseus and Lycurgus (Plutarch is in fact the most commonly cited author in W.'s *index auctorum* after Plato, Aristotle and Homer). But while similarities occur, they do not amount to verbal borrowings, and significant differences are also present.

<sup>834</sup> Cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 5.3.

<sup>835</sup> Cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 2.3-3.4, but there it is Lycurgus' *father* who first dies (2.3), then the elder brother, who leaves his wife pregnant. Has Ol. misremembered Plutarch, or is he using another source?

<sup>836</sup> W. refers to *Laws* 3. 683c-693c; in fact, while there is relevant material virtually up to the end of Book 3, Plato's views on the mixing of freedom and slavery may be seen particularly at 693d-694b and 701e-702a; the historical material is not derived directly from Plato, where there is nothing about Lycurgus being in control at such a time.

respect the rulers, but that there should be both slaves and free men. So Lycurgus recommended establishing the rule of the twenty-eight elders, so that as elders they should not excuse the rulers, if they acted improperly concerning the people, but should rebuke them. Neither should they excuse the citizens, if they saw them acting in a disorderly manner.<sup>837</sup> Of course he made the city smaller, and on being questioned 'Has the city become smaller?', he replied 'Yes, but more secure'.<sup>838</sup> In addition he instituted contests and gymnastic events for the Spartans<sup>839</sup> and recommended that they share common tables, to maintain friendship, and he introduced a contribution scheme for the wealthy.<sup>840</sup>

So some historians say that the wealthy grew angry with him and killed him, but the historian Dioscurides says 'Not so, but they confronted him, and a certain Cleandros blinded him and everyone else shuddered with fear as they grieved for him'.<sup>841</sup> But it is truer to say that his eyes were not harmed—he was fine.<sup>842</sup> For the historians say that he built a temple of Athena Ptilia, and they called the eyes '*ptilloi*'. But if he had been blinded, he would not have built the temple.<sup>843</sup> And he did another thing: for he contrived that wealth should be valueless, so that no-one desired to be rich.<sup>844</sup> For he gave orders that gold and silver coinage should not

<sup>837</sup> Cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 5.6-7; in fact Plutarch emphasizes not the role of fearless moral leadership (befitting an Olympiodoran aristocracy) but rather that of balance of power.

<sup>838</sup> A garbled account of a story in Plutarch (*Lyc.* 7.1-2) about the king Theopompus.

<sup>839</sup> Cf. Xen. *Resp. Lac.* 1.4, 4.2-6. Not brought out in Plutarch.

<sup>840</sup> Plutarch (*Lyc.* 11.1) links the hostility of the wealthy directly with the common meals, which he sees as directly undermining the desire for wealth. It looks as if Ol. is supposing that the rich are objecting to contributions which they were compelled to make to these meals, though the thought is far from clear.

<sup>841</sup> The man is called Alcandros in Plutarch (*Lyc.* 11.1-3), who makes it clear that only one eye was blinded. On the Dioscurides material (FGrHist 594 F1), and the difference between Plutarch and Ol., see Piccirilli (1980), who considers Plutarch the more reliable source.

<sup>842</sup> Plutarch (*Lyc.* 11.4) says that some said the temple had been built as a thanks-offering because the eye was saved. He attributes this story specifically to Dioscurides, but believes rather that the temple was built in order that the blinding should be remembered. It seems that Ol. is judging history by what best suits his desire to promote ancient Greek culture and to set up its revered figures as paradigms.

<sup>843</sup> In Plutarch *Lyc.* 11.4 the temple is for Athena Optilitis, being named after the Doric word for eye (*optilos*); cf. also *Mor.* 227a-b. Ol. is assuming that the temple must have been a thanks-offering.

<sup>844</sup> Cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 9.1-2.

be traded,<sup>845</sup> but only bronze, and that dripping with vinegar, so that it would decay. And next foreigners were driven away. For everyone considered 'If I stay here and work and take such coin-age to my own city, I will not be able to use it'. So much about Lycurgus. And there is nothing strange in a worthless fellow, such as Cleandros, finding some matter to use against a man such as this.

44.3. Let me also discuss Theseus. Note that the historians relate many mythical events as if they were history. So for example they say that the Athenians were sprung from the soil. And yet this is mythical and entirely foolish. For there is a myth that when Hephaestus cut open the head of Zeus and Athena emerged, Hephaestus pursued her hoping to have sex with her. When he was unable to catch her he spilled his seed onto the ground, and Erichthonius was born, from whom [descend] the inhabitants of Attica.<sup>846</sup> Note that the historians accept this as historical, although they ought to say they were 'sprung from the soil' in the way Plato does. For *he* says 'Let us say that the men in the city are 'sprung from the soil', employing a Phoenician falsehood ('Phoenician' refers to the story of how Cadmus sowed the teeth of the dragon and [men] came forth). Let us then falsely describe whoever we raise as 'teeth', and say that they are 'sprung from the soil', in order that they will serve the city well not only in the belief that it reared them, but also in the belief that it gave them birth, and they will conduct its affairs not as strangers to it'.<sup>847</sup>

44.4. Hence we should not accept the mythical accounts. Note that the dragon is the individual life of souls—for just as it was said to slough off old age, so too the soul through its constant motion toward becoming is always young—and the earth is the earthly

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<sup>845</sup> The word has a *polit-* root, which helps to suggest a link with Ol.'s principal theme of the commentary, that of the proper (internal/external) constitution.

<sup>846</sup> By 'historian' Ol. appears to mean those who take the detail of myths literally as descriptions of historical events. W. cites Apollodorus (3.14.6), but we do not know Ol.'s source for his myths. Compare his views on the handling of the surface meaning of myths, below 46ff.

<sup>847</sup> A creative use of the 'noble falsehood' passage of the *Rep.* (414b-e) in support of allegorical interpretations of myths: Plato there devised a suitable myth to be told in his ideal state, while Ol. is here saying that this was also done by those who instituted the very myths which Plato is trying to replace: thus he shifts the blame away from the inventors of the myths, onto those who have retold them as if they were meant to be taken as literally true.

designs of soul, the teeth are that which is able to divide life up, since it is with the teeth that we separate our food and mash it. Further, they say the chimaera had the form of a lion and a dragon. Some interpreters fall into worse errors in their allegorizing, for they say that Lion and Dragon were terrible men. And the philosopher Ammonius said 'Solon of Alexandria often said to me, on becoming general, "that is not true; but there was a woman in Lycia who was called Chimaera, and she bore two children called Lion and Dragon".' But these [interpretations] are entirely foolish. By the lion the poets signify the spirited temper in us, and by the dragon our appetitive element.<sup>848</sup>

44.5. Furthermore, to return to Theseus, they say that Pasiphae was a daughter of Helios and loved a bull and produced the Minotaur that Theseus killed. Some say that Tauros was a man, a general of Minos, who fell out with him and fought him, and for this reason was called Minotaur, i.e. 'Tauros, Minos' general'. And it was against him that Theseus was sent to fight. But this is false. For he was sent as part of the tribute, and if he had been sent against such a general he would not have been sent as part of the tribute. Again they say that Ariadne gave him a thread and so saved him from the labyrinth. Now all these things signify something different. For the Minotaur signifies the bestial passions within us, the thread signifies a divine power attached [to us] and the labyrinth signifies the crooked and variegated nature of life. Hence, since Theseus was excellent, he overcame these passions, and not only did he himself overcome them, but he also taught others to do so.<sup>849</sup>

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<sup>848</sup> Ol. protests against historicizing interpretations, which locate the references of mythic symbols in real animals or men, and offers in their place a neoplatonist allegory, interpreting the earthly terms of the myth as symbols of psychic descent and particularity. NB Ol. nevertheless calls historicizing interpretations 'allegorizing' (i.e. 'giving an account of a second meaning'). The error, as he sees it, lies not in allegorizing (for Ol. takes allegorical interpretation as natural) but in locating the wrong referents for the allegory. It is doubtful whether he includes among the historizers his fellow Alexandrian Ammonius (who certainly believed in allegorical interpretation of some kind, *In De Int.* 249.11-25), though his name recurs at 44.6. Proper allegory, as Ol. points out here, is psychological; here monsters (presumably because of their traditional connection with earth) represent lower levels in the Platonist analysis of the soul.

<sup>849</sup> Ol.'s source for the historicist interpretation of the Minotaur is Plutarch, reporting an idea attributed to the Cretans by Philochorus (Plut. *Thes.* 16.1 and 19.2). His own allegory makes the divine power equivalent to the reasoning faculty (cf. the divine part contrasted with the mortal passions



44.6. For that is what his saving the others who were sent with him [signifies]. Note that Theseus had a more moderating influence than did Odysseus. For Odysseus taught himself, but he was unable to teach others, for he did not save his own companions, whereas Theseus also taught others.<sup>850</sup> And further they say that Heracles went down to Hades and took Theseus after persuading the dog Cerberus. And some will say that a certain Dog was a brutal man. But this is false. What 'dog' signifies is the life of exposure, so Heracles, who was happy and very great, saved everyone through exposure. For his twelve labours signify different things too.<sup>851</sup> And furthermore they say that Sciron was found on the isthmus in rocky places, which the philosopher Ammonius said he had investigated, and ordered passers-by to wash his feet and trampled on them and killed them. But others say that he was most law-abiding and just, so that these matters are disputed, being myths, and we must not put our trust in those who dispute about them.<sup>852</sup>

44.7. If someone says 'Then neither ought we to put our trust in philosophers, since they dispute, some saying the soul is water, others that it is air, some that it is mortal, others that it is immortal', we say that in this case we put our trust in those who stay closer to the common notions. But there [in the surface meaning of myths] there are no common notions to guide our education. Hence we should first explicate the myths—for indeed Plato explicates them. So he said earlier what is a jar, what are the sieves and so on.<sup>853</sup> So we must not linger over the myth, but instead turn our attention to

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at *Tim.* 69c-e) and conceives of it as being attached to the irrational parts of the soul. For the notion of rational soul attached by a line to the irrational parts below see *Plut. Mor.* 591d ff.

<sup>850</sup> Odysseus' companions died because they did not obey his instructions to avoid eating the cattle of Helios (*Od.* 12). This polemic against Odysseus may be an attack on a rival conception of a hero.

<sup>851</sup> The idea appears to be that the dog's bark exposes people's faults, a notion which had regularly been transferred to the ancient cynics, whose hero is Heracles himself. For a very different dog-symbolism see 10.7, 25.10.

<sup>852</sup> Sciron was a monstrous opponent of Theseus (see below, 44.7). The dispute is mentioned by *Plut. Th.* 10.1-2. The reason for the reference to Ammonius is unclear though he is mentioned regarding historicizing interpretations (44.4), and for his stance against superstition (39.2). It would be unusual for a Platonist to have engaged in historicizing or non-allegorical interpretation.

<sup>853</sup> The disputes about the nature of the soul derive from *Phd.* 96b4. For the common notions and myth, see *Intro.* The reference to the jar, sieves, etc. is to *Grg.* 493a, on which see lecture 30.

the best constitution. That is surely why in the *Phaedrus*, when Socrates is asked what is the truth behind the Minotaur story and similar myths, he says, 'I do not know completely what I am, so how shall I, leaving aside my own nature, inquire into these things?'<sup>854</sup> So we should strive to know what is the essence of one's own self. For there is nothing greater than this.

That Sciron was happy, some infer from his being the father-in-law of Aeacus, that is the grandfather of Peleus and Telamon.<sup>855</sup> On the other hand we should say to those who tell myths such as these what Plato said to Dionysius about Heracles,<sup>856</sup> namely 'If it is true what they say about him, then he was neither son of Zeus nor was he happy, but wretched. But if he was indeed a son of Zeus and was happy, then these accounts are false'. In just the same way we must say about Theseus 'If he did what the myths tell, then he was base, but if he was a hero, then it is clear that certain other things are symbolically conveyed by them'. And since some were objecting that the Athenians killed him, it's a lie. For he was expelled by them, but he was not killed.<sup>857</sup> Therefore we must spurn the myths regardless, and hasten towards the truth, and pursue it as the cause of the good life for us.<sup>858</sup>

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<sup>854</sup> A reference to Socrates' scepticism about mythological interpretation at *Phdr.* 229-30. This passage does not mention the Minotaur story, but makes remarks about the interpretation of Hippocentaurs, Chimaeras, Gorgons, Pegasi, and monsters in general (230de). Plato's point is that excessive rationalization which turns myth into a plausibly historical record is not well-aimed (229d4); at 230a there is a hint that there may be more point in trying to understand mythical monsters in terms of the hybrid forces within the individual's own person, precisely the kind of invitation to the allegorical interpretation of myth that Ol. would seize on.

<sup>855</sup> The argument is given by Plut. *Th.* 10.2-3.

<sup>856</sup> Cf. 41.7.

<sup>857</sup> A dispute about Theseus' death is mentioned by Plut. *Th.* 35.4, but the question is one of murder or misadventure, not murder or exile.

<sup>858</sup> This extreme statement needs qualification, in view of the extended discussion of myth in the following lectures. What Ol. means is that one should disregard the surface meaning of myths, and reject their purported historical content. Myths have a deeper meaning that is to be taken seriously, but this is identical with the truth that is pursued as cause of the good life. At 0.5 the productive cause of constitutional well-being is virtue and the philosophical life (presumably the *pursuit of truth* rather than the truth itself).

Lecture 45 (521a2-522e8)<sup>859</sup>

45.1. 'Then define for me what kind of care for the city you're urging on me' (521a2): Socrates has demonstrated that the creative cause of constitutional well-being is virtue, since it is neither instructive rhetoric nor the demagogic type. For the instructive type either makes us knowledgeable or it does not. But if it does not make us knowledgeable, what is the use of it? Whereas if it does, how is it that it has not actually made anybody [knowledgeable]? Further, the demagogic type is useless because it is subservient to the people and welcomes democracy.<sup>860</sup>

It is on this account that Lycurgus too is admired, namely that he transformed the Spartan constitution for the better. Certainly it is said about him that after he gave them a fine constitution, because he knew that men cannot be relied upon to stay constant, he exacted an oath from them to the effect that they when he left the city they would preserve this constitution until he returned. And out of love for him they swore the oath, and since they were honouring it, Lycurgus died overseas in order that they should preserve the constitution by their sense of duty concerning the oath. And he devised that his body should be concealed from them, to prevent the Spartans getting their hands on it after his death, and thereafter repudiating the oath on the grounds that they had already received Lycurgus back. So for the most part the best [form of] constitution endured among them, until the time of Agis the son of Archidamus. Hence we should pursue virtue in every respect. Without this it is impossible to be a statesman.<sup>861</sup>

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<sup>859</sup> With the bulk of the dialogue concluded, Ol. winds up his treatment of Socrates' arguments against Callicles and hence against rhetoric, before moving on to the final myth, to which he will devote considerable attention. The topic of Lycurgus' statesmanship recalls lecture 44.1-3, and Aristides is again rebuked for the assumption that Plato called the Four 'flatterers'. There are hints too about the status and policies of contemporary 'statesmen', particularly insofar as concerns pagan teachers. If there is a connecting link between these topics it is that of the need for constitutional virtue, particularly for the statesman. There seems to be little effort in the *theoria* to keep close to Plato's text.

<sup>860</sup> Strangely the distinction between kinds of rhetoric, based on *Grg.* 454e has not previously been expressed in this way; it will recur at 46.7. Up to now the distinction has been between instructive and (merely) persuasive rhetoric (3.9, 5.13, 6.1-2, 5, 11). Cf. *In Phd.* 2.15, 8.18.

<sup>861</sup> As demonstrated by lecture 44 Lycurgus is for Ol. an example of a genuine statesman. Ol.'s source is Plut. *Lyc.* 29.1ff.

So Callicles, as I have said (42.1), resembles Sisyphus. For he lifts his head above the passions, but is again dragged down by them. And generally speaking he has been affected to some extent by Socrates' arguments. But whereas he has freed himself from the other passions, the fear of death still disturbs him and he thinks death the greatest evil. So Socrates says that this is not the greatest evil, for we should not even get upset at death because it is not even in our power. The one who entrusted this body to us removes it again, when he chooses.<sup>862</sup>

45.2. And so the greatest evil is to harm one's soul. So a man should not deprive others of their property, since doing this harms his own soul. Even if he then gives all the money he unjustly acquired to those in need, nevertheless he has done his own soul an injustice—he ought rather to have persuaded those who had it to distribute it to the needy, and not take it by force himself.<sup>863</sup> So Callicles says that death is the greatest of evils, and hence rhetoric is most important for protecting us from evil, whereas philosophy is the reverse, and is despised by him. That is how the philosopher gets dragged off by force and struck upon the head, and does not dare to do anything. Accordingly, Socrates says 'Anything to avoid doing injustice to my soul! For if someone drags me off, let him be reconciled to having his own self corrupt, aware that he does this unjustly.'<sup>864</sup>

So Callicles says to him 'You should be in public life and do what is expedient for the people'. But he gives the argument that 'a man in public life who does what is expedient for them and says what they like to hear is foolish'. He uses a hypothetical syllogism, and says 'If a man who does what is expedient for them is foolish, whereas I am not foolish, then I do not do what is expedient for them'. Observe that he does not argue for or explicitly mention the minor premise. What is the minor premise? It is the one that says 'Whereas I myself am not foolish'. He does not explicitly mention it because it would be in bad taste—it is not done to praise oneself. Then he produces the illustration of the cook and the doctor, and

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<sup>862</sup> An interesting attribution to Callicles of the fear of death as a basic passion, based originally on Callicles' fears for Socrates, 486a-b.

<sup>863</sup> This sounds like a veiled attack on enforced redistributions of wealth, official as well as unofficial.

<sup>864</sup> The bluntness of Ol.'s rendering perhaps implies consciousness on his part of being in a vulnerable position politically—cf. below, 45.2 *ad fin.*

says that the doctor gives unpleasant medicines as well, if need arises, whereas the cook always looks to what is pleasant. Hence, if the doctor were prosecuted and faced a trial before children, the cook would win. How would he be able to persuade foolish persons that he had prescribed unpleasant medicines because they were expedient? Everyone would vote for his condemnation. So too if they accuse me, asking why I am teaching the youth, will they ever be persuaded that I do this in their interests, in order that they may become men of true quality? So under such a constitution one must create a fortress for oneself, and live quietly within it all the time.<sup>865</sup>

45.3. **‘or to serve them and approach them aiming at their gratification?’** (521a4-5): he says ‘do you want me to be a servant of the Athenians and to speak for their pleasure, i.e. to be a flatterer?’ Note that it is because of this that they think he calls those four [statesmen] flatterers too. He called them ‘servants’ earlier, and now calls servants ‘flatterers’—for he says ‘serve them and approach them aiming at their gratification’. So they too, as servants, are also flatterers? We say ‘No!’ For he said ‘Nor did they employ flattery’, and it is about himself that he makes the present remark. For those four were not flatterers, just servants, for it was surely what they supposed to be good, however mistakenly, that they used to advise. Socrates, however, knows what is really good. So if Socrates, in the knowledge of the real good, should serve the city and do what was expedient for them and neglect the real good, then he would admittedly be a flatterer, because he knew the good but concealed it by means of flattery.<sup>866</sup>

45.4. **‘If it pleases you more to call a Mysian a Mysian’** (521b2): this proverb comes from the *Telephus* of Euripides.<sup>867</sup> Somebody asks about Telephus in it and says ‘Mysian Telephus’. Just as he is

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<sup>865</sup> The rhetorical question was clearly meant to be answered in the negative, making this a remarkably graphic and rare autobiographical observation about the perils of being a pagan teaching in a hostile context. Withdrawal to the shelter of a fortress or wall is a recurrent motif derived from *Rep.* 6 496c-e: cf. 26.18, 32.4, 41.2.

<sup>866</sup> One of Ol.’s major points of dispute with Aristides over the four democratic leaders concerns whether Socrates refers to them as flatterers, as alleged by Aristides. The textual reference is 517b. Ol.’s position is that Socrates called them servants, but not flatterers. See also 33.3, 41.18.

<sup>867</sup> Fr. 704N; the fragment is unplaced by Collard et al. (1995); see p. 52 for comment. Ol. has interpreted the phrase as meaning ‘call him what you will’.

recognized as Telephus whether he is a Mysian or not, so here too 'Whether you wish to call such a man a flatterer or a servant or whatever,' Callicles says, 'you have to adopt his attitude to the city.'

45.5. **'He'll have no good use for it' (521b7-8):** why? Will the thief not use the money? We say that he will use it badly, which amounts to not making use of it. For he uses it to commit injustice against his own soul.

45.6. **'perhaps by some wretched scoundrel' (521c5-6):** i.e. 'cheap', because in this case it can't mean 'bad' as he has already said 'wicked'.<sup>868</sup>

45.7. **'slimming' (521e8):** 'parching' and 'choking' are also read.<sup>869</sup> If we read 'slimming' or 'parching', then he is relating it to going 'hungry and thirsty'. But if it is 'choking', then we must relate it to the phrase 'giving you bitter potions'.

45.8. **"Gentlemen of the jury", (as you orators say) (522c1):** it is the orators' habit to keep saying 'Gentlemen of the jury': 'I too will be compelled to employ these words if I'm unable to speak the truth.'

45.9. **'I would be annoyed' (522d7):** he does not mean angry with the creator for making him die, but angry with himself, because he would be dying without having achieved anything good.

45.10. **'For if the soul is full' (522e3):** that a man should die with his soul full of [the guilt from] a multitude of crimes is the ultimate evil.

45.11. **'But since you've completed everything else' (522e7):** the arguments are at an end. Next the myth takes over.

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<sup>868</sup> Ol. comments on the regularly ambiguous term φαῦλος, translated as 'wretched' by Irwin.

<sup>869</sup> ἰσχναίνων, ἰσχων, πνίγων. Ol. appears to regard these as alternatives, but two are found in the surviving text. It may be disturbing that Ol. knows three readings none of which conforms exactly with the modern text, but our text seems certain to be correct.

**Lecture 46 (523a1)<sup>870</sup>**

46.1. ‘Hearken, then, as they say, to a perfectly fine account’ (523a1):<sup>871</sup> note that aristocracy was at its height among the Pythagoreans.<sup>872</sup> For aristocracy is what makes citizens upright, and people become upright by having their souls perfected. But perfection of the soul does not arise except through life and insight. Nor could insight arise unless one’s life has previously been corrected, for insight does not occur in a soul that is soiled. Consequently, the Pythagoreans used first to purify their life by habituating themselves to sampling the passions with just the tips of their fingers,<sup>873</sup> and so they gave insight to their successors. Hence they lived together in aristocracy.

46.2. These [remarks above] needed to be added, and they have been added by way of a finishing touch to what has already been said.

Next let us proceed to what lies before us. But because Plato expounds a myth, let us inquire first how the ancients came to fashion myths at all, second, what the difference is between philosophical and poetic myths, and third, what the purpose is of the myth now before us.

Let us begin with the first question and say how they were induced to construct myths. Note that they employed myths with reference to two things, nature and our soul. With regard to nature

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<sup>870</sup> In lecture 46 Ol. moves on to tackle the final myth of judgment. The first paragraph, as 46.2 makes clear, is not a commentary on the lemma, but further comment on what has already been tackled—a faithful reflection of the lecturer’s practice. The remainder of 46 is an introduction to the myth in more general terms than the *theoria* of lecture 47, asking why Plato uses myths, how his myths differ from those of the poets which he criticized, what sort of myth we have before us, and its purpose within the dialogue: which will be to clarify the paradigmatic cause of the politically happy life.

<sup>871</sup> Not a commentary on the lemma: see above.

<sup>872</sup> Ol. has also discussed aristocracy in 42.2 and 43.3.

<sup>873</sup> We have emended ὄψων to παθῶν, as in other Olympiodoran passages. For what is nearly a definition of ἄκρῳ μόνῳ τῷ δακτύλῳ see Ol. *In Alc.* 145.20-21; it is equivalent to the medical principle σμικρῷ χειρὶν, cf. 55.1-3, and 6.11-12 σμικρῷ ἔλαττον. The principle is homeopathic: indulge just a little in the passions in order to get used to dealing with them. Ol. is not himself committed to this approach, for it involves giving the patient a little of what is not good for them, the passions being something fundamentally bad. He gives a different account of Socrates’ tactics at *In Alc.* 6-7, 55, 145-6, and he seems to favour the eradication of the passions rather than their moderation: see 21.5, 22.2, 34.3, 35.3, 9, 37.2n, 40.4.

and the task of the demiurge, one must note that the invisible is inferred from the visible and the incorporeal from the bodily.<sup>874</sup> For incorporeal powers exist, and it is from bodies that we grasp their existence in our minds.<sup>875</sup> For we observe [bodies] to be well-ordered, and recognize that there is some incorporeal power governing them. Consequently there is a moving power which controls even the heavenly bodies. Since, further, we observe that our body moves, but not after death, we recognize that there has been some incorporeal power that moved it. Observe then that we confirm the incorporeal and unseen from the visible and bodily.

Now myths too are produced so that we may proceed to the invisible from the apparent. Take, for example, [our reaction to] hearing of the adultery of the gods, of bindings and dismemberments and the castration of Ouranos and the like: we do not pursue the surface meaning in such matters, but proceed to the invisible and seek the truth. This is how they employed myth-making with reference to nature.

46.3. Regarding our soul it was as follows: when children, we live in accordance with imagination, and our imaginative faculty is concerned with shapes and forms and suchlike. So that we may heed the faculty of imagination, we employ myths, since the imagination enjoys myths. After all, a myth is nothing other than a false statement imaging the truth.<sup>876</sup> If, then, myth is an image of truth, and if the soul is also an image of what is before it, it is reasonable that the soul enjoys myths as image to image. Since we grow up with myths from the tender conditions of childhood, we cannot help taking them over.<sup>877</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> For the principle of inferring the unseen from the seen compare Proc. *In Remp.* 1.67-69.

<sup>875</sup> Hesitatingly reading ἐχόμεθα for ἐρχόμεθα at p. 236.28. The latter is correct at 237.8 and 11, but there is an argument for reading κατεχόμεθα for κατερχόμεθα at p. 259.22.

<sup>876</sup> The definition of myth perhaps owes something to *Rep.* 2 377a; however it is not typical of Platonism nor philosophy in general, nor late Neoplatonism, though Proc. *Theol.* 1.4.21.7-10 may have been influenced by it. Jackson (1995), 278, compares passages in Damascius, but there is no close parallel. The definition occurs under the entry for 'myth' in both the Suda and Hesychius, is also present in Eustathius *Il.* 1.4.26, 424.11, and apparently antedates Ol. since it is present in Theon's rhetorical *Progymnastica*, 59.22, 72.28 Spengel. This shows how rhetorical literature has influenced the tradition of *Grg.*-commentary in particular.

<sup>877</sup> For our familiarity with myths from childhood and consequent delight in them see 41.2, Proc. *In Remp.* 1.46.14-27, anon. *Prol.* 15.14-19.



46.4. These remarks have been directed to answering the first question, how they came upon the idea of myths. Next we must discuss the difference between philosophical and poetic myths.<sup>878</sup> We say that each of them has an advantage over the other and yet also a disadvantage. For example, poetic [myth] has the advantage that its content is such that even one who happens not to believe it nevertheless proceeds to a concealed truth. For what man with sense believes that Zeus wanted to lie with Hera on the very ground, without going into the chamber?<sup>879</sup> So poetic myth has the advantage of saying the sort of things that does not allow us to stay with the surface meaning but makes us seek a concealed truth. Nor do they say such things about gods alone but also about heroes. For how could a soldier say to a king:

‘You wine-sack, with a dog’s eyes’,<sup>880</sup>

and how was it a hero shed tears for a girl’s sake and did not embrace restraint? And Homer himself said that Anteia was raving like a whore, when he said:

‘Divine Anteia, wife of Proetus, lusted madly for him’<sup>881</sup>

whereas he said of Bellerophon that he was wise, ‘thinking noble thoughts’. How, then, could he who says these things now say the opposite about Achilles? Hence he means something else, and we must seek what is concealed. So they have an advantage in this respect—for they did not know that there would arise a degenerate

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<sup>878</sup> With these lines introducing the distinction between philosophical and poetic myth W. compares Proc. *In Remp.* 1.71-86, 159-63, Amm. *Int.* 249.11-23, Philop. *In De An.* 69.30-70.2, 116.23-26, and anon. *Prol.* 7.18-33, but these parallels prove disappointing. Jackson (1995), 279 n.8, observes that Ol. is only dealing with what Proclus calls ‘inspired poetry’ when he speaks of poetic myth.

<sup>879</sup> This vivid Homeric episode of deception and seduction on Mt Ida (*Il.* 14.331-50) was a traditional example of mythic indecorousness, derived ultimately from Socrates’ criticisms at *Rep.* 390b. Syrianus wrote a monograph on it and it features prominently in Proclus (*In Remp.* 1.133ff.). For them the allegorical meaning of the myth is that Zeus represents the monad (*peras*), and Hera the dyad (*apeiria*), and their union stands for the reversion of lower to higher. The open-air coupling, which Zeus favours, reflects his superior standing, just as union in the chamber, which Hera favours, reflects her inferiority (135, 6-8, see Sheppard, 1980, 62ff.).

<sup>880</sup> *Il.* 1.225, cf. *Rep.* 389e-90a: the soldier complained of is Achilles, addressing Agamemnon.

<sup>881</sup> *Il.* 6.160 and (below) 6.162: Glaucus reports that Anteia desired Bellerophon, but that Bellerophon restrained himself wisely.

human society that respects only what is apparent, and does not search at all for what is concealed in the depths of the myth.<sup>882</sup> So poetic myth has an advantage in this respect, in that it says things that not even cursory hearing accepts, but proceeds to the concealed. It has the disadvantage, however, that it deceives youthful ears.

46.5. That's why Plato expels Homer from his state because of such myths. He says that the young cannot listen properly to such myths, so they should not listen to them, not even to lead them as far as the 'underlying meaning', i.e. as far as allegorical interpretation. For they are not receptive of allegory, so they should not listen. For the young do not know how to judge what is and what is not [allegorical], and whatever they grasp is 'hard to cleanse'.<sup>883</sup> So he recommends that they learn other myths.<sup>884</sup>

46.6. So much, then, for poetic myths; philosophic myths have the opposite feature, that even if one stays with the surface meaning, one is not harmed. They postulate punishments and rivers under the earth: even if we stay just with these, we will not be harmed. So they have this advantage, that even if we stay with the surface meaning, we are not harmed. But they have the disadvantage that since their surface meaning is not harmful, we often stay right there and do not seek the truth.

Myths differ in this way, then. These [philosophical myths] are also constructed so as not to transmit doctrines indiscriminately. For just as in temples the sacred objects and mysteries are behind screens, so that the unworthy do not see them indiscriminately, so here too myths are screens for doctrines, so that they are not uncovered and accessible to anyone who wants.<sup>885</sup>

Besides, philosophical myths look to the three [cognitive] activities of the soul. For if our entire selves were minds alone, with no imaginative faculty, we would not need myths, since we would always deal with intelligibles. If on the other hand we were entirely without reason and lived in accordance with imagination and

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<sup>882</sup> The remark is veiled, and we hesitatingly accept the interpretation of Westerink (1990), xxvii.

<sup>883</sup> Alluding twice to *Rep.* 378d-e, which is important for justifying Ol.'s reading of *Rep.* 2-3.

<sup>884</sup> Presumably the sort referred to at 41.2.

<sup>885</sup> Compare Ol. *In Cat.* 11.39-12.13 (also El. *In Cat.* 124.32-125.2, *Proc. Theol.* 1.4.21.7-12): Ol. here gives the impression that he means primarily philosophical myths, but the same idea is applied to poetic myths in *In Cat.*

this was our only protection, it would be necessary for us to live all our life as if in a myth. But in fact we have intellect and opinion and imagination. Hence demonstrations are given for intellect—and Plato says that if you want to function in accordance with intellect, you have ‘demonstrations entrapped in bonds of adamant’,<sup>886</sup> if in accordance with opinion, you have the evidence of persons of sound opinion, and if in accordance with imagination, you have myths that stimulate it, so that from all of them you are benefited.<sup>887</sup>

46.7. So much for the second problem. There remains the need to inquire what is the aim of this myth.<sup>888</sup> At the beginning, if you remember, we inquired into the creative cause of constitutional knowledge and we said that it was not rhetoric, neither instructive nor demagogic, but that it was well-being<sup>889</sup> and we demonstrated this. Further, in the arguments with Callicles the final cause was demonstrated, namely that it is not the pleasant but the good.<sup>890</sup> And now by means of this myth [Plato] discusses the paradigmatic cause. Already he has demonstrated this cause too, when he introduced the universe and said that it is an orderly system, not a disorder, and that we should aim at it.<sup>891</sup> Now also he expounds the paradigmatic cause.<sup>892</sup>

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<sup>886</sup> *Grg.* 508a-9a: but the total substance of what Plato ‘says’ here is nowhere expressed in the dialogues, the three-fold distinction between intelligence, opinion, and imagination itself being unusual; for a similar tripartition of discursive thought (διάνοια), opinion, and imagination see *Sst.* 263d-264b.

<sup>887</sup> Note that this theory is applying the doctrine of *Phdr.* concerning the importance of matching different types of speech to the different types of soul to be persuaded (271a-277c), and doing so in accordance with the tripartite division of soul which underlies that work. *Phdr.* itself could easily be held to begin with an emphasis on received opinions, pass through myth, and proceed finally to demonstrations.

<sup>888</sup> For earlier discussion of the aim (σκοπός) of the dialogue and of its parts see 0.4-5, 15.1, 24.1, 25.1, 32.2, 34.2.

<sup>889</sup> At 0.5 the philosophic life was the creative cause, and at 45.1 it was virtue. To say that it is well-being makes little sense, unless perhaps Ol. is assimilating the creative cause to the final cause, something which Ammonius did at a universal level, *Simpl. In Phys.* 1360.24ff., *In De Caelo* 271.13-29. On this matter see Verrycken, 1990a, 216-220.

<sup>890</sup> It is interesting that Ol. (Or his recorder) here omits the intervening discussion of the formal cause, on which see 0.5, 15.1, 24.1, 25.1, 34.2. The only one of his five causes of which he does not detect discussion within *Grg.* is the material cause, though even here see 6.1 and 11.2.

<sup>891</sup> *Grg.* 507e-8a.

<sup>892</sup> So far we have not been told that a new part of the dialogue will treat the paradigmatic cause, though at 35.15, as at 0.5, that cause is identified with the cosmos, the object of imitation at *Tim.* 90a-d. Ol. is perhaps reluctant to

He says that there are universal rulers, who judge us after we leave the body, and assign to each what we deserve. Since Callicles had said 'rhetoric is a great thing because it saves people in court',<sup>893</sup> Socrates says 'do not pay attention to these particular judges but to the universal judges, for it is from them that one who has lived well will receive the verdict, and rhetoric will be valueless since those judges cannot be influenced. And if you pay attention to them, you will then find that what is lawful by convention coincides with nature, and then you could not claim that laws do not exist by nature but by convention'. It is for this reason then that the myth is taken up at this point.<sup>894</sup> We will discuss what it contains, dealing with it section by section.

46.8. And in addition to all these points, let us also inquire for a while into this: is the myth a *nekuia* or is it only a myth?<sup>895</sup> To understand what I am saying, let me put it in the following way. Plato openly relates myths in many places. For example in the *Statesman* he relates a myth that of old in the golden age the movement of the heavenly bodies was not such that the movement of the planets was opposed to that of the fixed stars, indeed there was no summer or winter.<sup>896</sup> This is a myth by general agreement, for by this it speaks riddlingly of something else.<sup>897</sup> In the *Symposium* too he narrates a myth about Eros, and there is one in the *Republic*, and also in the *Phaedo*.<sup>898</sup> And earlier in this dialogue he expounds a myth,<sup>899</sup> similarly here. But we must understand

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regard this as a *separate* part of the dialogue.

<sup>893</sup> Paraphrase of *Grg.* 485e-486c, cf. 511a-c.

<sup>894</sup> While Plato does not directly offer this reason for the myth, it is an interesting and plausible link between the myth and the preceding argument coming from an interpreter much more eager to bring out the moral lessons in the text than its author had been.

<sup>895</sup> Ol. seems to understand *nekuia* as just a story which describes the underworld, not, as e.g. Plutarch *Mor.* 17b, as a magical rite of invoking the ghosts to predict the future. The link may be *Od.* 11 (ibid. 740e), which came to be known as a *nekuia*, and which involves both underworld descriptions and the summoning up of ghosts.

<sup>896</sup> *Plt.* 269c-274e, already heavily overlaid with later interpretation. What the myth speaks of is in fact the change of direction of the sun and heavenly bodies (269a, 271c); there is no specific mention of the fixed stars. The absence of inclement seasons is implied at 272a6-7, but there is no suggestion that this results from the absence of conflict between heavenly motions.

<sup>897</sup> On the allegorical interpretation of this myth, which Ol. can regard as a commonplace (for indeed it is being used as a primary example of one which cannot be taken literally), see Dillon (1995). Also general intro., 25.

<sup>898</sup> Ol. is referring to *Symp.* 203a-4a, *Rep.* 614b-621d, *Phd.* 110b-115a.

<sup>899</sup> *Grg.* 493a-c. See lecture 30.

that not every mythical composition is a *nekuia*, but those myths that discuss the soul are the ones called *nekuiai*. The myth in the *Statesman* is not a *nekuia*, for it is not about the soul, but about the heavenly bodies.

46.9. Likewise the myth in the *Symposium* is not one. There are only three that are *nekuiai*, one in the *Republic* (for the myth in the *Republic* discusses souls), one in the *Phaedo* and the one transmitted here.<sup>900</sup> Note then that in that world there are judges and places of correction and also those who are judged. In the *Phaedo* he discusses the places of correction, saying that there are four rivers and that souls are purified in the Acherousian lake, and so on, as the poets also say. And that there are fiery elements under the earth is confirmed by the mountains of Aetna in Sicily.<sup>901</sup> For he says 'the sensible man believes that there are fiery elements under the earth. But to maintain that we will be punished in these very rivers and the like is something we cannot say. Nevertheless, I know that either these things are truly so, or if not these, then something of the sort'. So there he is discoursing about the places, while in the *Republic* about the judged, and here about the judges who render the verdict.

Given that this is well said, it is worth inquiring why, since there are, as I said, three *nekuiai*, Iamblichus seems in one of his letters to recognize only two, the one in the *Phaedo* and the one in the *Republic*, but not the one here. We say that perhaps the man to whom he wrote the letter had asked him to say something about these two *nekuiai*, and this is why he mentions only two. For such a great philosopher would not be ignorant of this one.<sup>902</sup>

There are, then, painful sufferings under the earth, because our passions are inflamed by a lust for pleasure.<sup>903</sup> If then the passions

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<sup>900</sup> On the three *nekuiai* see also Proc. *In Remp.* 1.168.11-23; Dam. *In Phd.* 1.471, 2.85; Ol. *In Mete.* 144.13-145.5, El. *In Isag.* 33.11-18. W. (1977, 241-2) regards Porphyry as the ultimate source, appealing to Macrobius *Somn.* 1.1.6-7; *Od.* 11 will be seen as a *nekuia* too, if not a philosophical *nekuia*.

<sup>901</sup> Cf. *Phd.* 111d-e; the following paraphrase draws on 114d. This passage does not demonstrate an interest in geophysics.

<sup>902</sup> On Iamblichus' having omitted *Grg.* myth from the group of *nekuiai* see Jackson (1995), 291-5. If the demiurgic interpretation of the work, based directly on the myth, did indeed stem from Iamblichus, then he could easily have seen its proper subject here as the demiurgic and judicial powers (whose role here is also emphasized by Ol.) to the exclusion of the soul, whose wanderings in Hades are not depicted.

<sup>903</sup> For the cure of pleasure-induced ailments by pleasure's opposite cf. 47.7; 50.2.

arise by the application of pleasure, then clearly it is through the application of pain that their excision will come, and the path back towards what is finer. For the Hippocratic ordinance, which says that healing is by opposites, holds in this case too.<sup>904</sup>

#### Lecture 47 (523a1-b1)<sup>905</sup>

47.1. 'Hearken then, as they say, to a perfectly fine account' (523a1): the opening of the myth seizes the attention of the listener. For when we want to say something to someone, we say 'hearken, my friend', and this 'hearken' has as a result become almost a commonplace—for everyone uses it when they want to speak. Hence too [Socrates] says 'as they say', i.e. 'hearken, for that's how those wanting to speak say, "hearken to a perfectly fine account".' Why does he say 'perfectly fine'? We say that it is with a view to distinguishing it from the myths of the poets. For they are merely fine, but not perfectly [fine], for they are not fine on the surface too but only beneath the surface. Philosophical myths, on the other hand, which are also fine on the surface, are 'perfectly fine'.

That the poets too speak about the gods in the mythical mode is clear from this: they say that the gods are eternal, and they also say that they procreate. Yet these are incompatible. For procreating goes along with a prime, for we procreate in our prime, and what has a prime also has a decline, but what has a decline cannot be eternal. So how are those who procreate [able] to be 'eternal gods'?<sup>906</sup> Hence certain other things are riddlingly signified by

<sup>904</sup> Hippocrates *Flat.* 1, cf. *In Alc.* 6. Acceptance of *Grg.*'s treatment of justice as analogous to medicine entails that the medical practice should be applicable to ailments of the soul as well.

<sup>905</sup> In lecture 47 Ol. moves on to questions specifically relating to the myth in *Grg.* He is striving here to defend Platonist theological beliefs because their use of myth and associated theology is liable to render them open to suspicion in Christian eyes. Much of the lecture is therefore taken up with allegorizing interpretation of the names of (e.g.) Kronos, Hephaestus, and the Blessed Isles. Another important theme is the necessity for non-literal interpretation because of the absurdity of introducing a chronological sequence into accounts of an eternal realm. In this lecture Ol. is inclined to speak of 'philosophers' as a group, meaning those Platonists who adhere to traditional pagan philosophy; hence much of the material has parallels within fifth and sixth century Platonism. It is clear that Ol. is defending them against Christian criticism of their theology.

<sup>906</sup> A curious proof of inconsistency as an example of surface absurdity. Presumably the incompatibility is that 'past its prime' implies a loss of potency, and thus excludes eternal procreativity. It would seem simpler to

these things. Since Socrates proceeds to the deep [meaning] of myths and does not attend to the surface [meaning] he says 'I think it is a true account, but you, Callicles, regard it as a myth, since you are not able to grasp its concealed [meaning].'<sup>907</sup>

47.2. Let that suffice for these matters. And note that philosophers think there is a single starting-point of all things and a single transcendent cause that is first of all, 'from which all things spring', to which they attach no name.<sup>908</sup> For what name could be assigned to it? That is surely why someone says in his hymn:<sup>909</sup>

How shall I praise you, you who exceed in all things?  
What account will celebrate you who are not even graspable by  
intellect?

So they say that there is a single starting-point for all things, but that this does not produce the things in our world in an unmediated way.<sup>910</sup> For it would be disorderly, if we were produced by the first cause itself. For an effect seeks to liken itself to its cause as far as it can; and in so far as one cause is greater than another cause, so too the former's effect is greater than the latter's.<sup>911</sup> In just the same way one who is more knowledgeable produces pupils of greater renown.<sup>912</sup> Necessarily then other greater Powers [than us] were produced by the first [cause], and then likewise we were produced by these. For we are the dregs of the universe, since we

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argue directly that there is a contradiction between being born, i.e. coming into being at some time, and being eternal; but such an argument might be unpopular among Christians, or at least among those of no christological refinement. The argument is also used in 4.3.

<sup>907</sup> This may seem puzzling: it seems that responding to a story as a *logos*, not a *mythos*, means for Ol. being aware of its inner truth rather than its outward falsehood. It makes no difference that this is a philosophical rather than a poetic myth, for at 46.3 Ol. has defined *all* myths (i.e. their surface meanings) as false.

<sup>908</sup> As usual in Neoplatonism philosophers means Platonists, but this is the only chapter of this work referring to what the philosophers do collectively, cf. 47.5, 6, 7. The third-person use ('they', not 'we') is striking. Also rare is Ol.'s reference the Platonists' first cause (cf. 4.3, quoting the same lines), the hypercosmic principle prior even to the paradigmatic cause.

<sup>909</sup> These verses are also quoted at 4.3; see there for authorship.

<sup>910</sup> W. compares Hierocles, *In Carm. Aur.* 417b-420a Mullach, indeed there is material relating to the beings between god and man in sections 1.6 to 4.5 (9.18-22.19 Koehler).

<sup>911</sup> W. compares Proc. *Elem.* 28 ('Every producing cause brings into existence things like to itself before the unlike': Dodds, 1962).

<sup>912</sup> Ol. characteristically adds an argument from a pedagogic context; for other passages relevant to the teacher-pupil relationship see 2.10, 5.12, 6.4, 8.1, 42.3.

were necessary if the world were not to be incomplete.<sup>913</sup> So there exist other greater Powers, which the poets also call a golden chain, on account of their close connection with one another.<sup>914</sup>

Now the first Power is intellective, and then [there is] the life-generating Power and the healing Power and so on, which out of a desire to signify [they] speak of symbolically.<sup>915</sup> Do not be disturbed by names, hearing talk of a Power of Cronus or a Power of Zeus or suchlike, but concentrate on the objects themselves, for we signify something different when we use these names.<sup>916</sup> If you wish, think that these Powers do not have individual essences and are not distinct from one another, but place them within the first cause and say that there are within it both intellectual and vital Powers.<sup>917</sup>

47.3. When we say Cronus, do not be disturbed at the name, but consider what I mean: for Cronus is *koros-nous*, that is pure intellect.<sup>918</sup> That is the reason we also call pure and virginal females

<sup>913</sup> For the dregs of the universe see also 48.7, Dam. *In Phd.* 1.168, neither of which directly makes humans the 'dregs'.

<sup>914</sup> Homer *Il.* 8.19, a passage which had captured the imagination of philosophers since *Tht.* 153c.

<sup>915</sup> 'They' perhaps refers to both poets and philosophers. Ol. often appears here to conflate the First Cause and Intellect, reverting to what seems a pre-Plotinian position, but Verrycken (1990a) answers this claim, and we are under no obligation to regard the supreme principle as a 'Power' at all. One might indeed detect in the final sentence of this chapter a reference to the three Plotinian hypostases, with tolerance (but not affirmation) of the view that the first cause (= the One) contains both Intellect and Soul.

<sup>916</sup> Ol. does not specify the confusion that mythical names might produce: perhaps the impression of persons, of plural individuals (cf. 4.3: names imply particularity, so the first principle has no name), capable of ungodly indecorous passions and acts, rather than the abstract powers and principles that their names riddlingly refer to; perhaps the implication of gender, 47.4; perhaps also the fear that worship of stone idols is recommended by Platonists, 47.5.

<sup>917</sup> Ol. leaves it to his students to decide whether to call divine orders hypostases or attributes—his own indifference would be remarkable (cf. Westerink, 1962: xxiv, 1990, xxiv-xxv), but for the risks associated with trying to prescribe any particular degree of monotheism among Christians who had argued so forcibly among themselves over the correct interpretation of the Trinity.

<sup>918</sup> Kronos is standardly allegorized/etymologized by Platonists as *koros-nous*: 'Pure Intellect', following the example of *Crat.* 395e, and using etymological clues to allegorical meanings. The allegorical reinterpretation of the Hesiodic succession myth may go back as far as Numenius, (who has three gods, the first known as grandfather, *Proc. In Tim.* 1 303.27-304.22 Diehl = fr. 21 des Places). But the celebrated treatment is Plotinus' (*Enn.* 3.5.2, cf. 3.8.11.38; 5.1.4.8; 5.1.7.33; 5.9.8.8), and his more obvious predecessor is Harpocration (ibid. 304.22-305.2). Plotinus follows *Crat.* 396b in reading Kronos as



'maidens' (*korai*). So by this name we signify the Power of intellect. For this reason the poets too say that he swallowed his own children and vomited them back up, since intellect turns back on itself and is itself both seeker and sought.<sup>919</sup> So he is said to have swallowed his own children and vomited them back up for this reason, namely because [intellect] not only seeks and conceives, but also brings forth and benefits. For this reason too they call him 'curved-wit', because the curved shape inclines towards itself.<sup>920</sup> And further since there is nothing without order or innovative in intellect, for this reason they describe him as an old man and slow to change.<sup>921</sup> That's of course why the astrologers say those who 'have Cronus on side' are wise and possess intelligence.

47.4. So that is what is signified by these things. Further, they speak of life by using the name Zen as well as Zeus, because it is through himself that Zeus gives life.<sup>922</sup> And further they say that the sun, Helios, proceeded on four horses and they describe him as young, signifying by this his four turnings and his prime, and they say that Selene, the moon, proceeded on two bulls. On two because of her waxing and waning, and on bulls, because just as they work the earth, so too the moon governs the cosmic order around the earth. And further they say that Helios is male and Selene female, since it belongs to the male to give and to the female to receive. So since the sun gives the light and the moon receives it, for this reason they give him a male name and her a female. These are poetic names, so do not be disturbed.

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*koros-nous*, with *kópos* both 'son' and 'fulfilment': Intellect is without mixture, for it is satisfied and not in need of anything else, and keeps within itself all its offspring (i.e. the Intelligibles are within Intellect). The violent motifs in the myth are allegorized into the generation of the spiritual and psychic world from the highest principle: their regression, the end of procreation and the stability of being as it turns back to its origin is what is symbolized by the cutting of the genitals. Ol., like most Platonists, normally treats *all* the Olympians as part of Intellect—and indeed elsewhere Plotinus himself compares Zeus to the One and to Intellect. On this topic see Hadot, 1981, Pépin, 1976, 203-206, Lamberton, 1986, 106.

<sup>919</sup> Cf. Ol. *In Phd.* 1.5, Dam. *In Prm.* 140.1-9, 149.8-11R.

<sup>920</sup> For Cronus and 'curved' see Proc. *In Remp.* 2.75.8-10, where the typically Proclan reversion-theme occurs.

<sup>921</sup> The slowness of Cronus is of course usually connected with his star being the slowest planet known; this gives rise to the association with old age in astrological texts, where this is in fact a malevolent planet—hence one which one is anxious to have in a favourable position. Ol.'s use of the 'authority' of astrology here is thus misleading.

<sup>922</sup> For the connexion between Zeus and ζῶη see *Crat.* 395ef.

Now [Socrates] says that Zeus and Poseidon and Pluto apportioned their kingdom, [after receiving it] from Cronus. And because Plato is not constructing a poetic but a philosophical myth, he does not say, as the poets do, that they took the kingdom from Cronus violently, but says 'they apportioned it'.<sup>923</sup> What is this 'receiving the rule from Cronus'? Rule is the apportionment of intellect,<sup>924</sup> and I have said that Cronus signifies intellect. For this reason then rule comes from him.

Note that the nature of the things within the universe—those that come after the things beyond the universe (for they are completely without body, even heavenly body)—is threefold.<sup>925</sup> The things within the universe are threefold: the heavens, the earthly realm and the intermediate realm, i.e. things of fire, air and water. The heavens belong to Zeus, the earthly realm to Pluto, and the intermediate realm to Poseidon. Further, through these [divine figures] Powers established over these realms are signified. For Zeus holds a sceptre to signify his legal power, and Poseidon a trident to signify that he is overseer of the threefold realm, the one that is intermediate, and Pluto wears a helmet on account of the darkness. For just as a helmet conceals the head, so too his power is over things that are unseen.

47.5. And do not think that philosophers honour representations in stone as divine. It is because we live in the sensory world, and are not able to reach up to the bodiless and immaterial power, that we devise representations as a reminder of those things, so that by seeing and respecting them we might arrive at a notion of those bodiless and immaterial Powers.

Now this tale too is told by the poets: Zeus lay with Themis and produced three daughters, Good Order, Justice and Peace.<sup>926</sup> Good

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<sup>923</sup> Ol. rightly recognizes that Socrates' laconic and euphemistic retelling of the myth is itself an early episode in the rationalizing of the Hesiodic and Orphic myth of divine succession, and it is thus appropriate that he should use the idea in this context to supplement the traditional Platonist analysis. The violence of the succession stories is left in place at *In Phd.* 1.3.

<sup>924</sup> For νόμος as νοῦ διανομή, see *Law* 714a, also used at 26.3.

<sup>925</sup> On the threefold nature of the universe see *Proc. Theol.* 368.16-24P. It seems that Cronus is the deity responsible for the realm beyond the universe, and Zeus and the other two (cf. also Hera) responsible for the universe (suggesting a link with aspects of soul). Note that this seems to assign to Zeus a role beneath the Intellect (as in Plotinus), giving aspects to Posidon and Pluto too.

<sup>926</sup> For these three daughters of Zeus, *Eunomia*, *Dike*, *Eirene*, see *Hes. Th.* 901.

Order operates among the fixed stars, for in that realm there is eternal, unchanging motion and no separation. Justice operates among the planets, for in that realm there is a separation of the stars, and where there is separation, a need exists for justice to make fair distributions. And Peace operates in our realm, since there is also struggle here, and where there is struggle, a need exists for peace—there is struggle between hot and cold, wet and dry, which, although they struggle, are nevertheless reconciled.

These then are the tactics of the poets. This is also why they say Odysseus wandered over the sea at the wish of Poseidon. For thus they signify Odyssean life that is not terrestrial, yet still not heavenly, but intermediate. So since Poseidon is lord of the intermediate realm, that is why they say Odysseus wandered by the wish of Poseidon—he belonged to the allotted realm of Poseidon.<sup>927</sup> Hence too they say that some are sons of Zeus, some of Poseidon and some of Pluto, in accordance with the allocation of each of the three. For someone with a divine and heavenly character we call a son of Zeus, someone with an earthly character we call a son of Pluto and someone with an intermediate character we call a son of Poseidon. And further, Hephaestus is a Power established over bodies, and for this reason he said of himself<sup>928</sup> ‘and all day I was carried’, since [Hephaestus] always concerns himself with bodies. For this reason too he always works at his bellows, i.e. at natures, for this Power brings forth nature to care for bodies.<sup>929</sup>

47.6. Now since [Socrates] refers here to the Blessed Isles and justice and requital and imprisonment, let us say what each of these is. Well, the geographers say that the isles of the blessed are in the region of Ocean and that souls that have lived well depart

<sup>927</sup> See Lamberton, 1992, 123, on the Plotinian handling of Odysseus; 1986, 65, on Numenius’ handling of Posidon. It is perhaps surprising how little Posidon features in discussion of Odysseus’ wanderings, which are an established theme of Neoplatonic allegorizing, see Lamberton, 1986, 115-132.

<sup>928</sup> Reading *περὶ αὐτοῦ* at 247.8W. The reference is to *Iliad* 1.592.

<sup>929</sup> There is wordplay on the terms for bellows (*φύση*, cf. *Il.* 18.372) and nature (*φύσις*). It is not clear why *Ol.* includes Hephaestus, who is not mentioned in *Grg.*, except that he had become a favourite topic of allegorization: Proc. *In Remp.* 126.5-127.21 (cf. *Hermeias In Phdr.* 260.22) comments on Homer’s description of the gods’ laughter at Hephaestus’ lameness, allegorizing it as orphic signs of their providential care. *Ol.*’s note refers rather to Hephaestus’ falling (*Il.* 1.592), and spells out a providential aspect of Hephaestus as a power that cares for bodies (cf. rather Proc. *In Tim.* 1.142.11-143.25, *Theol.* 403.20-22P; *Ol. In Alc.* 211.2-3).

there.<sup>930</sup> But this is absurd. For by departing to that far-off spot, souls would live the life of Cnemon, since they would have nothing to take part in.<sup>931</sup> So what do we say? Note that the philosophers<sup>932</sup> liken human life to the sea, because it is disturbed and concerned with begetting and salty and full of toil. Note that islands rise above the sea, being higher. So that constitution which rises above life and over becoming is what they call the Isles of the Blessed. The same thing applies to the Elysian plain. And this is also why Heracles performed his final labour in the western regions—he laboured against the dark and earthly life, and finally he lived in the daytime, i.e. in truth and in light.

47.7. Note that requital differs from justice.<sup>933</sup> Justice is more universal, for justice deals with the impious, taking revenge upon them, and it also deals with the just, enabling them to enjoy its fruits. But requital is particular, applying only to those who act wrongly.

Why is being subject to requital<sup>934</sup> a 'prison'? Note that the philosophers<sup>935</sup> believe the earth possesses holes like a pumice-stone, and that it is pierced right through to its very centre.<sup>936</sup> They say that here in the centre there are a variety of places both fiery and chilly and also the Powers of Charon, as evidenced by exhalations from the earth. This place, at its deepest extent, is called Tartarus. Note that souls which have lived wicked lives remain here a certain time, until their vehicle pays the penalty.<sup>937</sup> For since, as I

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<sup>930</sup> Ol. refers to unnamed geographers also at 50.2; W. cites Strabo 3.2.13, and Ptol. 1.12.10.

<sup>931</sup> The character from Menander's well known *Dyscolos*, who had become a stock example of an unsatisfied life (W. cites Aelian *Ep.* 13-16, Amm. *Int.* 114, 30-31). The condemnation of the tedium of the Isles of the Blessed may be more original, perhaps even a reaction against the Christian heaven.

<sup>932</sup> W. cites *Phd.* 85d and *Laws* 803a-b, neither sufficient to justify the present claim.

<sup>933</sup> The distinction, stemming from 523b3, is made in a very different way in Proc. *In Remp.* 2.140, 6-13 and 184, 14-19, but in both places Proclus is referring to the myth of *Grg.*

<sup>934</sup> W. suggests emendation, bringing the earth into the question ('Why is to be in the earth a prison of requital?'), but this seems implausible since the question appears to be related to the Platonic text, which does not treat the earth.

<sup>935</sup> Plato and his followers: *Phd.* 111c-112e, treated by Dam. *In Phd.* 1.533-542, 2.140-45, and (in relation to Aristotle) by Ol. *In Mete.* 141.21-148.24.

<sup>936</sup> A marginal diagram is present in the MS (W. p. 248) of the chasm in the earth.

<sup>937</sup> This is the sole place in this commentary where Ol. explicitly uses the notion of the soul's vehicle—not the chariot of *Phdr.*, but rather something

have said, they acted wrongly out of desire for pleasure, they are also chastised through pain.<sup>938</sup> Note that what is bound remains motionless, being in subjection. For on reaching Tartarus they are no longer in motion, for it is the centre of the earth and there is nothing deeper than it. If they moved, they would proceed back upward, for what is beyond the centre is up. That is why the prison is located there, with demonic and earthly Powers in command. They signify demonic Powers through the [names of the] dog Cerberus and suchlike.<sup>939</sup> And note that as a result you have a difference between divine and infernal Powers.

47.8. **'Now there was this rule'** (523a5): It has been said frequently that of the divine realm one says neither 'was' nor 'will be', since the 'was' has gone by and no longer exists, and the 'will be' is incomplete and does not yet exist.<sup>940</sup> But it is not possible to conceive of either of these in the divine realm. So neither 'was' nor 'will be' is said of it, but always 'is'. It is because Plato introduces this subject in the form of a myth that he says 'was', to give the myth a setting. But since the myth is not poetic but philosophical, he also introduces 'always is'. Alternatively he said 'always is' because he said it proceeds from Cronus, that is from intellect. And such things always are.

47.9. **'And piously'** (523a7): one who respects justice concerning men is called just, and one who in addition acts well concerning the divine is also called pious. That's why we call the godless 'impious'. So a just and pious man is one who both honours the gods and treats men as they deserve.<sup>941</sup>

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akin to a spiritual body, able to feel and hence to be punished: this is a commonplace of Neoplatonic psychology, and relates to *Phd.* 113d: see Dam. *In Phd.* 1.543 (202N), 2.146 (241N). Neoplatonists spoke similarly of 'garments' which the soul was able to put on, and 50.3 speaks rather of the punishment of its spiritual garment.

<sup>938</sup> For punishment by the opposite of the temptation, cf. 46.9.

<sup>939</sup> Cf. *Proc. Remp.* 2.180.18-181.8.

<sup>940</sup> This is not an internal reference since the doctrine is not openly expressed elsewhere in the commentary (though cf. 48.1), so it either represents doctrine that the listeners would have encountered previously, or simply points out a commonplace of Platonizing philosophy.

<sup>941</sup> W. refers to *Euthph.* 12c-e, but this is a commonplace (cf. also *Grg.* 507b). However, the marginal diagram relates it to *Euthph.* insofar as it regards piety as a species of justice, though interestingly this adds a third class of justice dealing with lower animals.

**Lecture 48 (523b4-e6)<sup>942</sup>**

48.1. 'Judges in the time of Cronus' (523b4): the constitutional [craft], divine as well as human, creates a division of those subject to it<sup>943</sup> and divides them into rulers, i.e. judges and legislators, and those who are judged. Now [Socrates] relates a myth like this: once upon a time Pluto reported to Zeus that judgments were being made badly and contrary to deserts. For some who had lived good lives were going to Tartarus and not to the Blessed Isles, and others who had lived wickedly and deserved to be sent to to Tartarus were going off to the Blessed Isles. So Zeus said 'I shall end this manner of judgment, and I shall do so by no longer having the judges clothed in bodies—they will be naked, and the judged similarly will no longer be embodied but also will be naked.'<sup>944</sup> In addition I shall remove their foreknowledge of death, so that they will not know when they are going to die.'

In this way the myth, moving forward like a story, does not preserve the simultaneity of things that are contemporaneous, but divides them into earlier and and later, and speaks of what is less perfect as earlier, and only then brings in what is perfect. For we should advance from the imperfect to the perfect.<sup>945</sup> This is what I mean: the myth says that long ago the judges were [clothed] in bodies, but now are naked, and that long ago the judgments were bad, but now are good. Note the distinction, but observe that it does makes it *as a story*, since in reality, as I shall demonstrate, there are always naked judges and always embodied ones, and there are always bad judgments and always excellent ones.

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<sup>942</sup> In lecture 48 Ol. gives a non-temporal reading of the myth, which treats it to a degree non-literally. However, whether the term 'allegory' is appropriate is debatable; for Ol. clearly takes the 'clothed judgment' to refer to our own estimation of people, so that the myth turns out to refer not to deeper mysteries which cannot be plainly revealed, but rather to the world of everyday human experience. This may be thought to concur with his distaste for excessive intricacy of theology and metaphysics. By contrast, the 'naked judgment' is not really interpreted allegorically at all. The removal of our foreknowledge of death is treated fairly straightforwardly as the removal of our supposition that we are going to pass into non-existence. After an affirmation of free will, Ol. launches into unnecessary allegorization of the stories about Prometheus, before returning to Minos and Rhadamanthys.

<sup>943</sup> Reading ὑπόντων; the text seems to speak merely of a division of reality (δυντων), which is inappropriate here.

<sup>944</sup> Ol. is conflating nakedness and disembodiment.

<sup>945</sup> Cf. 47.8, 48.2.

48.2. Let me deliver the interpretation of the myth, and this will be evident. Plato says that judgments are made badly, and those who have lived wickedly are sent to the Blessed Isles, whereas those of good constitution are sent to Tartarus. By this he signifies our judgment in this life here. For we often say, when a bad man has died, 'Alas, what a divine man has died; may he go to the Blessed Isles'. Observe that in our own judgment we do not consign him to Tartarus as a wretched fellow, but send him to the Blessed Isles. We do this because of emotional involvement affecting our judgment. For often we know that he was bad, but since he has been good to us, say by [financially] supporting us or procuring advantages for us or suchlike, we praise him as a good man. Sometimes we do this, not because our lives are emotionally linked with him, but as a result of deceit and without involvement.<sup>946</sup> For often we think, in line with appearances, that he is good and for that reason we commend him, but we are deceived, because the stain of his vice is concealed. See how badly we judge, whereas the divine judges judge correctly, for they know who ought to go to Tartarus and who to the Blessed Isles. So it is in relation to *our* judgment that the myth says there were bad verdicts.

Observe that it is for ever simultaneously true that our judgment is distorted and unsound, while superior beings judge divinely. The myth, however, begins from what is imperfect and says 'long ago there were bad judgments', but then proceeding to the perfect it says 'but now they are just'. Why is it that Zeus did not do this on his own initiative, but had to be told by Pluto?<sup>947</sup> We say this signifies that the inferior always reverts<sup>948</sup> to the superior: so as an inferior Power [Pluto] reverts to the Power of judgment.

48.3. So much about what the bad judgments signify. Now let me go back to demonstrating what [the myth means by] original

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<sup>946</sup> The contrast is between situations in which the *πάθη* have come to play a role, and those where they have not entered into it, making the mistake a purely cognitive one.

<sup>947</sup> Note that the objection, possibly a rationalizing Christian one, is dependent on the view that Zeus ought to be omniscient. It is further answered at 49.1, where the explanation given is that Pluto represents 'angelic powers'. Cf. Schol. *Grg.* 523b.

<sup>948</sup> 'reverts': the Platonist doctrine of *epistrophe*. Whereas this concept had been intimately connected with human conversion and repentance in the earlier parts of the commentary (1.6 etc.), it now assumes its familiar Neoplatonic metaphysical significance cf. 47.3, 50.3: Mind and Soul turning back upon themselves.

embodiment and subsequent nakedness. Here too the myth separates what belongs together and invites us to proceed from the more imperfect to the more perfect. Note that here too [the myth] refers riddlingly to our life here and to life there. For we who are embodied pass judgment on the judged who are also embodied, and that is how error arises. For as a result of the great wealth and resources of the judged, we necessarily judge badly and say what is pleasing to the rulers and suchlike. But there the judges are naked. For just as those who see through in a mirror do not see clearly, so too those who judge when embodied have their judgment clouded. That is why the judges are naked there. The same is true of the judged, so their great wealth does not deceive the judges. Observe also that the judges and the judged are always naked and always embodied; but as a myth it put imperfection first, leading on to nakedness and perfection. The interpreters have not been able to grasp this because they have traversed the depths of Plato's language; for he says this clearly and emphatically, and nothing other than this.<sup>949</sup>

48.4. Now that we have discussed this, let us next examine the third question, namely what [is signified by] the removal of foreknowledge of death. For we ask 'did he create foreknowledge of death as a good or as something evil? If good, then why does he now remove it, although it is good? If he removes it on the ground that it is evil, then why ever, if it is evil, did he introduce it in the beginning?' Since this is a problem at the surface level, we must expound the concealed truth.<sup>950</sup> Some say 'He acted well when he removed foreknowledge of death. For if we knew when we were going to die, then we should always live badly and unjustly, but at the time of our death we should do some small share of good and appear to be of good constitution. But as things are it is the greatest

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<sup>949</sup> This odd emphasis on a transparently obvious meaning, not far removed from the surface, appears to be Ol.'s own. He opposes a reading of the myth as a purely poetic myth, which would presumably involve the rejection of any obvious meaning in favour of a concealed one. He may be pursuing the idea of a link between the surface elements and their concealed meaning in philosophic myths as part of an effort to establish criteria for allegory. One of the interpretations which he is rejecting must surely be the view that the myth (like the overall dialogue) is trying to unveil Plato's theology concerning the demiurge (cf. 0.4). For the need for Proclus to revert occasionally to the acceptance of surface features of a myth see Kuisma, 1996, 87.

<sup>950</sup> Ol. does not seem to be consistent in the degree of concealed depth which he postulates.



good that we do not know the time of our death, for we are compelled to act as autonomous and truly rational agents. And of course Epictetus too says, "Take care to keep death in mind and you will not do anything cheap in this guest-house".<sup>951</sup>

This is well said,<sup>952</sup> but we must explain what it means that there should once have been foreknowledge, but it should now have been abolished. Note that there are three dilemmas<sup>953</sup>: the first asks 'Does the soul live only here together with the body and is it destroyed together with it, or is it separated from the body and does it survive just by itself?' The second asks 'Is [the soul] judged only here in this life or in another life too?' The third asks 'Is it only humans who judge or is there a divine Power too?' In these dilemmas, the three first options imply each other, and the alternatives also imply each other. That is to say, if the soul lives only here and is destroyed together with the body, then it is clear that it is judged only here and not elsewhere too, and that the judges are human only and not a divine Power. Further, the three latter options have the same implication: for if the soul exists by itself separated from the body, then clearly it is judged in another life too, and by a divine Power and not by humans. So again in this case too the myth draws a distinction: for we imagine that this foreknowledge of death [refers to] our being rid of our current life, thinking that the soul is no longer judged thereafter, whereas the truth is that the real judgment takes place there. So he removed the 'foreknowledge here'—though it would be more correct to call it ignorance—teaching us that we must look to those judges.<sup>954</sup>

48.5. The myth is directed at Callicles, teaching him he must not be subservient to the present judges but look to those there; that way we would act as autonomous agents; for it is in our power to

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<sup>951</sup> Epict. *Man.* 21. The term 'guest-house' reinforces the message by alluding to the brevity of our stay in the body and the fact that it is not our long-term home.

<sup>952</sup> Following W.'s suggestion of καλῶς for ἄλλως.

<sup>953</sup> ἀντίθεσις appears here to signify a question offering two possible answers of which one and only one must be correct.

<sup>954</sup> In other words, in removing our foreknowledge of death, Zeus removed our *imagined* knowledge that we must at some time die; in fact we (i.e. our soul) are never going to die, and the supposition that we will is therefore ignorance. What we call death, i.e. the separation of the soul from the body, will do nothing to take away the threat of having to answer for any crimes we commit. Once again, although Ol. interprets the myth atemporally and allegorizes away the mythical gods, he seems here to be finding a surprisingly literal message in it.

choose or not to choose virtue, as it is not something forced upon us. For there is no scope here for astrology, for in that case providence and the administration of law and justice would be destroyed. As the philosopher Ammonius says, 'I know some men, who despite having the destiny of adulterers according to astrology, are nevertheless virtuous, because the autonomous element of the soul wins out'.<sup>955</sup> Astrology is believed to have something to do with the worth of each person and their destiny. Yet if we act as autonomous agents, then nothing results from it, and Aristotle too, by introducing the concept of possibility, undermines it.<sup>956</sup> And Plotinus too abolishes astrology by means of a dilemma: he says 'The stars are either ensouled or soulless. Now if they are soulless (which is not the case) how could they act on anything, acting without soul? But if they are ensouled and act in a more godlike manner than we can, then how is it that they favour one person with wealth and suchlike, and another with poverty and other misfortunes?'<sup>957</sup> Hence we must act as autonomous agents and in the knowledge that this is in our power.

48.6. Since [Plato] says that [Zeus] instructed Prometheus to end the foreknowledge, let us deliver an interpretation of the poetic myth about Prometheus.<sup>958</sup> Prometheus is the overseer of the descent of rational souls. For this is the task of the rational soul, to have forethought<sup>959</sup> and above all to know itself. For irrational [creatures] perceive when they are struck a blow,<sup>960</sup> yet know nothing before they are struck, whereas the rational [soul] is able above all to ascertain the good. This is surely why Epimetheus is

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<sup>955</sup> Ol., following Ammonius, emphatically affirms against the astrologers the freedom of the will (at least the will to be virtuous), no doubt a thesis welcome to contemporary Christians.

<sup>956</sup> *De Int.* 9, 18a28-19b4.

<sup>957</sup> A reference to Plotinus' famous treatise on whether the stars are causes (2.3), particularly 2.3.2. Ol.'s account does not suggest a detailed recollection of the passage.

<sup>958</sup> Ol. characteristically seizes on a minor point as an excuse for allegorizing away these Hesiodic figures. W. cites here *Proc. In Remp.* 2.53.6-8, and 2.20.24-25 on the contrast with irrational animals responding to blows, but the parallels are remote; Ol. may be attempting to give a definitive rendering. On Plotinus' use of the Prometheus and Pandora story see Lamberton (1986), 103-4; the important similarity with Ol. is the absence of any unworthy motives on the part of both Zeus and Prometheus.

<sup>959</sup> Forethought is virtually what Prometheus' name means.

<sup>960</sup> While W. also cites Heraclitus B11, *Critias* 109b-c, *Proc. In Remp.* 2.20.24-5, Ol. *In Alc.* 178.17-18, for a more meaningful parallel see *Proc. In Alc.* 279-18.23.

appointed the overseer of the irrational soul, because he understands after he is struck and not before. So Prometheus is the Power established over the descent of rational souls. This rational soul is fire, and since fire tends upwards, so too the soul pursues and clings to higher things.<sup>961</sup> And why is [Prometheus] said to have *stolen* fire? What is stolen is removed from its own sphere to a foreign one. So since the rational soul it is sent here from on high, its own sphere, virtually a foreign place, that is the reason why fire is said to have been stolen.<sup>962</sup> And why in a fennel-stalk?<sup>963</sup> The fennel is hollow. So it signifies the changeable body into which the soul is brought. And why did he steal it against the will of Zeus? The myth is again continuing as a story.<sup>964</sup> In fact both of them, both Prometheus and Zeus, wanted the soul to remain on high. But since it was necessary for it to be brought down, the myth presents what is appropriate to the characters, and it presents the stronger, i.e. Zeus, as unwilling (for he wanted it to remain on high) and it makes the weaker drag it down here.

48.7. So [Zeus] made a gift of the woman Pandora, that is female comeliness. What does this signify? The irrational soul.<sup>965</sup> For since the soul, being incorporeal and divine, has fallen into this realm, and was not able to be joined to the body without a mediating element, it is joined through the irrational soul. This is called Pandora because each of the gods [the poet] says, favoured her with a gift. What is signified by this is that the illumination of things here comes from the heavenly bodies. For he said 'turn yourself toward things of a lower order'.<sup>966</sup> For just as light shines merely by acting as light, so too God orders the universe merely by acting as God.<sup>967</sup> Hence the universe necessarily had to be

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<sup>961</sup> W. cites Dam. *In Phd.* 1.170.19-22, *In Phlb.* 60; Ol. *In Phd.* 1.6, but parallels are hard to discern.

<sup>962</sup> W. cites Proc. *Prm.* 718.27-39; schol. Hes. *Op.* 32.25-33.8 Pertusi. Dam. *In Phd.* 170.19-22 is relevant here.

<sup>963</sup> Cf. Schol. Hes. 33.17-24 Pertusi.

<sup>964</sup> I.e. it has to incorporate certain details within a plausible narrative, and has to allow events necessary to the story-line to be the work of whichever character is most appropriate.

<sup>965</sup> Hes. *Op.* 59-82, Schol. Hes. *Op.* 34, 11-16 Pertusi. Ol. has already associated Epimetheus with the irrational soul (48.6).

<sup>966</sup> W. refers here to *Tim.* 41c, but *τρέπεσθε* and *ὑμεῖς* are insufficient words in common to prove a connexion, and we are expecting 'he said' to refer rather to Hesiod, particularly to the instructions of Zeus at *Op.* 60-69.

<sup>967</sup> W. cites Proc. *Elem.* 122, relevant to the general theme though not to the use of light imagery; this however is a Neoplatonic commonplace.

perfect, and what is perfect has a beginning, middle and end. And the universe also had to have dregs and a lowest element, so that there should be the things subject to generation and decay.<sup>968</sup> And Hesiod said that [Zeus] gave her to us and that we received her, 'embracing our own misfortune',<sup>969</sup> thus signifying that it is through the irrational soul that our life<sup>970</sup> involves the passions. Let that suffice on this point.

When the myth refers to Minos and Rhadamanthys as judges, we say that it means souls that love God.<sup>971</sup> For there would be nothing amazing about souls that have lived well knowing about the wrongdoing of other souls, but even so if they have knowledge, they keep it to themselves, and do not sit in judgment. For it is a judge's task to deliver a verdict. It is clear that Minos and Rhadamanthys are not humans, in the first place because humans do not judge there; and secondly because, if it is humans judging, then were souls not subject to judgment before these humans got there, and did souls also recognize each other there, even after purification when operating without bodies? So now I have dealt with this, and there remains no difficulty in the account.<sup>972</sup>

48.8. **'For they are judged while they are still alive'** (523c4): note that it is possible to grasp from all this that he is speaking about things here as well as about about things there.

48.9. **'By eyes and ears and their whole body'** (523d3): look how clearly he speaks about those who judge and are judged in this life.

48.10. **'on that day'** (523b6): this passage occurs earlier nearer the beginning of the section, but through oversight did not receive interpretation in the appropriate place.<sup>973</sup> By 'that day' he means

<sup>968</sup> On the dregs of the universe see 47.2.

<sup>969</sup> Hes. *Op.* 58.

<sup>970</sup> Following W.'s emendation of ζωή for ψυχή.

<sup>971</sup> The parallel with Proc. *In Remp.* 2.313.23-314.9 perhaps explains a deeper level of interpretation here, with emphasis on the judges not having been humans, and the supporting point about judgments before their appointment as judges.

<sup>972</sup> An interesting insight into Ol.'s view of the job of the commentator: 'to remove the difficulties' in the original. It would be helpful to know whether 'difficult' (δύσκολος) is used in the sense of 'difficult to explain' (LSJ II 2) or 'troublesome, harrassing' (LSJ I 1), referring not so much to perceived inconsistencies as to aspects which a Christian audience will find it hard to relate to.

<sup>973</sup> This lemma should precede 48.8. It is unclear whether it is a teacher's error, or the notetaker's.

either this life or the hour of our death. For this reason Solon also said 'in long life look (to see) how it ends'.<sup>974</sup> So he says that the living used to sit in judgment on the day of a man's death, determining whether a dying man was good or bad, not knowing that there were other judges in that world to whom one should be looking. For they judge impartially, deceived by no-one, for it is impossible for them ever to be bribed.

#### Lecture 49 (523e6-524d7)<sup>975</sup>

49.1. 'Now I have realized this before you' (523e6-524d7): acting very considerably, Plato also includes some truth in the myth, so that we do not remain with its surface meaning and disregard the truth concealed in the depths. So the myth says that long ago the judgments were made badly, and later Pluto and his attendants—that is, angelic Powers<sup>976</sup>—came to Zeus and said 'they are conducted badly and need correction'. Since the myth says this, in order that we do not remain at the surface, he makes Zeus say 'I realized this before you, and I have appointed my own sons as judges' (523e6-8). Observe that the myth, like a story, separates things that are naturally synchronic and leads us from the imperfect to the more perfect.<sup>977</sup> So God knew, then. For if he produces things here by his very being, how could he fail to know everything that arises? For he says

<sup>974</sup> Close to the spirit of Herodotus 1.32.9.

<sup>975</sup> In lecture 49 Ol. continues his non-temporal exposition of the myth, explaining many of its features allegorically. Some important features emerge, such as divine foreknowledge even of the minutiae of this world (49.1), the priority of the monad over the dyad (49.3), and that vice is alien to the soul in its natural state (49.6).

<sup>976</sup> It is not clear in what sense we are to understand the description of Pluto and his attendants as 'angelic powers', and it may indicate only that they here play the role of messengers, and are Powers in the sense of 47.2. There is a curious parallel with an odd passage of Porphyry, *Harm.* 15.10ff. Düring (printed as Thrasyllus T23.44-47Tarrant, but without conviction), where our *logos* is supposed to be like a king who knows whatever happens in the corners of his empire before *his messengers* (the sensations) come and report it to him. This seems a glaringly inappropriate description of any human king, so that passage too may ultimately be linked with the interpretation of *Grg.* 523e. Here, however, Ol. is fully aware that the foreknowledge motif cannot be applied to mortals, as its strangeness is supposed to make us reject the surface interpretation.

<sup>977</sup> See also 48.1.

'I understand the dumb and I hear what is not uttered'<sup>978</sup>

After dealing with this, let us say why these [judges] are called the sons of Zeus, why some of them judge those from Asia and others judge those from Europe. For that is surely not the way things are. Note that if we accepted these details as true, the account would be ridiculous.<sup>979</sup> In the first place we would be appointing humans to render judgments there too. Secondly, how could humans be the offspring of gods too? That is ridiculous and incredible. In particular those who died before these three men would not have been judged, because there was nobody to judge them. Further, it would not be the souls of the whole world that are judged. For it is not the whole world that is divided into Asia and Europe, but only the part that is inhabited by us. For the earth is spherical, and in the inhabited part on the opposite side from us there is no Asia or Europe.

49.2. So these souls would be found to have been unjudged. So let us give the true account. Each of us is said to have a god as a father symbolically, in relation to his [manner of] life. For example, one who is active with his intellect is said to be a child of Cronus, because he acts in a divine manner. Similarly, a man with the qualities of a judge is said to be a son of Zeus. These three, that is Minos and Rhadamanthys, who judged those from Asia,<sup>980</sup> and Aiakos, who [judged] those from Europe, led a judge's life here, and that is why the myth says they are children of Zeus and judge there.

What do Europe and Asia signify? Note that Asia, as we know, is eastern, while Europe lies more to the west. Eastern parts symbolically stand for<sup>981</sup> the heavenly bodies because of their shining, while Europe [is related to] to the earthly [realm] because of its darkness. Hence, by means of these two, Asia and Europe, he dis-

<sup>978</sup> The Delphic Oracle's (hence Apollo's) famous reply to Croesus' question *apud* Herodotus 1.47.3.

<sup>979</sup> Note that the surface of philosophical myths can also be ridiculous.

<sup>980</sup> Minos does not judge exclusively those from Asia in Plato, but takes on any cases which the other two judges are unable to resolve. Perhaps Ol. and other interpreters of his age had a slightly different text, as 523a-524a includes many variant readings in the indirect tradition. The following would suffice: δύο μὲν <τῶν> ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας, ... ἓνα δὲ <τῶν> ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης, ....

<sup>981</sup> Literally 'are analogous to', but the language of analogy (cf. 0.8, 49.3) is regularly used by Ol. for symbolic representation.

closes the heavenly and the earthly constitution. But there is also a medial constitution, which he signifies by teaching of extremes. For by speaking of the heavenly and earthly constitutions he also discloses the medial. Similarly he spoke earlier of some [souls] proceeding to the Blessed Isles, others to Tartarus, and so too disclosed the souls that have a medial life.<sup>982</sup>

It is worth inquiring why he said two persons judge those from Asia, while there is one for those from Europe.<sup>983</sup> For he ought to say the reverse, if, that is, the heavenly relates to the monad, and the earthly relates to the dyad.<sup>984</sup> We say no! One should take a pair of monads and one separate monad.<sup>985</sup> For what did the myth say? 'I shall give the senior role to Minos, so that if the other two, Rhadamanthys and Aiakos, are puzzled, they can refer to Minos'. Do you see how the dyad is dependent on the heavenly monad? 'So the judges there are puzzled?' We say that because puzzlement tends to give rise to knowledge, he calls the lesser knowledge, considered in relation to the divine and exceptional knowledge, 'puzzlement'.<sup>986</sup> And the reason he said this is because the lesser Powers depend on the one starting-point of all things.

49.3. He speaks also of the place where these judges pass judgment, and says that they sit in a meadow and judge at a cross-roads.<sup>987</sup> What is the meadow? Note that the ancients described generation as wet (hence it is said of the soul that 'death for human souls is to become wet'),<sup>988</sup> because generation is in flux and moist, and because their lives come to bloom here. The place of judgment, then, is said to be in aether, after things below the moon.<sup>989</sup>

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<sup>982</sup> The tactic of inferring a medial term from two extremes (cf. 49.3) is Proclan; though there *are* three judges here, Ol. treats them as two.

<sup>983</sup> One should read ἓνα δὲ τῶν ἐξ Εὐρώπης, not τὸν, at 258.27W.

<sup>984</sup> That which represents a higher plane is naturally associated with odd number, preferably a monad, while what is lower is associated with even number and the dyad. For comparable argument see 0.8. On the metaphysical importance of the monad and dyad in Syrianus see Sheppard (1982).

<sup>985</sup> The meaning here is obscure, and the text uncertain. We have adopted W.'s suggested οὐ, δεῖ δὲ ἐνταῦθα λαμβάνειν ....

<sup>986</sup> The postulation of *aporia* as a first step towards knowledge sounds very Socratic (e.g. *Meno* 84a-c, cf. *Thi.* 155d), but it plays no part in Ol.'s educational methods.

<sup>987</sup> For Proclus' explanation of the meadow, again involving moisture, see *In Remp.* 2.157.9-158.7, and for the identity of the crossroads with the meadow see *ibid.* 2.132.23-133.2.

<sup>988</sup> Heracl. B77; quoted by Proclus also, *In Remp.* 2.270.29-31. Ol. presumes that our coming into this world is a 'death' for souls, 29.3.

<sup>989</sup> On the location see Proc. *In Remp.* 2.133.2-24.

Since the place of judgment is in the furthest area of generation, and this is a meadow, as has been said, because of its moistness and colourful variety, this is the reason a meadow is mentioned. There is a crossroads there because from that place some [souls] are sent up as being worthy of elevation to the heavens, while others are drawn down to the underworld, while others are confined<sup>990</sup> within the middle place, i.e. within generation.<sup>991</sup> By judge is meant what we now mean by a divider,<sup>992</sup> because he divides, condemning the unjust and rewarding those who live well. Conceive of these [terms] symbolically, for [souls] do not come up or get taken down in a physical sense. Further, when here too he speaks of the crossroads he refers explicitly in his teaching to the heavenly way and to the underworld way, but not also to the medial road to rebirth, so that once again we have to infer the medial from the extremes.

Note that philosophic myths have this advantage too over poetic myths, that philosophical myths also openly produce reasoning<sup>993</sup> in the midst of mythical material, like the morals of Aesop's myths. So here too someone will surely say 'If the judges are always there, how can they know what happens here?'. [Plato] says 'Death is nothing but the separation of soul from body. The body retains for a certain time after death the signs of its suffering and healing—baldness, for example, if the man had been bald, largeness, if he had been large, smallness, if he had been small, scars, if he had received scars from wounds, and the like. So too souls on departing retain the general character of their of life, their conscience as it were.'<sup>994</sup> And then the judges observe this general character, conscience, and recognize what they have done'. Observe that even his reasoned lesson is that of one handling a myth. For who does not know that the judges are divine Powers

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<sup>990</sup> Reading κατέχονται for W.'s κατέρχονται. See also the proposed correction of 46.28.

<sup>991</sup> For the first time Ol. explicitly reads reincarnation into this myth, but such a reading suits his tendency to read the corpus as a single philosophic system.

<sup>992</sup> Word-play on δικαστής and διχαστής; cf. Arist. *EN* 1132a30.

<sup>993</sup> The Greek uses the term ἀπόδειξις (demonstration), but this can scarcely be being used in the familiar logical sense. Ol. is referring to the exposition of Socrates' 'reasoning' at 524a8 ff., marked by the presence of the verb λογίζομαι (b1). For the 'moral' of a non-philosophic myth see 34.4.

<sup>994</sup> There is a play here on εἶδος (general character) and συνειδός (conscience).



and know things both here and everywhere?<sup>995</sup> But he gives a reasoned lesson as if focussing on the myth. For this is what he did in the *Phaedo* concerning fire, and said there is nothing amazing about there being fire beneath the earth, as rising vapours indicate.

49.4. **'This is what I have heard, Callicles'** (524a8): Callicles was familiar with these myths, but had not penetrated to their deep meaning.<sup>996</sup> That is why he expounds them to him and explicates their deep meaning, so that he might know that those judges are not subject to influence and that rhetoric that inclines to injustice is no use there.

49.5. **'Or most of them for some time'** (524d3): 'for some time' is well said, for it is not for ever. So too is 'most of them'. Why? Because there are some superficial passions which, as soon as death occurs, immediately disappear.

49.6. **'What belongs by nature'** (524d5-6): do not think from this that vice is natural to the soul. For if the soul is incorporeal and immortal, and possesses vice by nature too, then vice too will be immortal. But that is absurd. What he says is that from nature comes either soul which cohabits with unseemly things, thus causing its very being to become fused, as it were, with vice, or soul which has been slave to the temperament of the body. For it has been claimed that 'the powers of the soul follow the temperament of the body'.<sup>997</sup> But they add 'unless one takes the preventive measures of philosophy'. The soul pays the penalty for this reason too, that although it is in general autonomous and has received spirit and appetite and such temperaments, it did not use its autonomous element to harmonize them and set them on a nobler path. For just as the doctor rightly chides the one who suffers eye-disease, not because he suffers eye-disease but because he rubs his eyes and irritates them and does not preserve the state produced by the doctor, so the creator punishes the souls that did not, through their autonomy, prevail over the passions which were given to

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<sup>995</sup> The assumption that there are divine powers who judge us is treated virtually as a common notion.

<sup>996</sup> Presumably what Callicles is familiar with, but has failed to grasp the deep meaning of, are the poetic myths of the underworld, material of which is utilized here in a new philosophical myth which Socrates explicates.

<sup>997</sup> A medical principle familiar from Galen *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur*, *Scr.Min.* ii 32-79. Cf. also *Proc. In Tim.* 3.349-50.

them for the better.<sup>998</sup> For they ought to have prevailed over them and used them for good and not for evil.

### Lecture 50 (524d7-527e5)<sup>999</sup>

50.1. 'And so, when they appear before the judge' (524d7): although Plato is recounting a myth, he does not leave it with a simple poetic character but also includes reasoning. For this is a special feature of philosophical myths.

Now since he says that the judges judge naked, and also that those being judged display the crimes on their conscience during judgment, he will say that powerful dynasts are particularly subject to judgment. For beggars lack the power for any substantial wrongdoing, since they do not possess the means to facilitate such vice. And he says that Homer also testifies to this, saying that Odysseus went down to Hades but did not see Thersites being judged, since he was not a powerful man and what wrong could he have done?<sup>1000</sup> But he did see Sisyphus and Tityus and Tantalus. He saw Tityus lying on the ground and a vulture eating his liver. Now the liver signifies that he had lived by the appetitive part of the soul and was being punished by this means, and the earth signifies his earthly designs.<sup>1001</sup> But Sisyphus, who had lived by the ambitious and spirited part, was rolling the stone and falling back down, since a man of bad constitution is caught in its downward flow. He was rolling a stone on account of the harsh and stubborn nature of his life. And [Odysseus] saw Tantalus in a marsh, and there was ripe fruit in the trees which he wished to

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<sup>998</sup> For once Ol. recognizes that we should have passions in some sense of the term.

<sup>999</sup> In the final lecture Ol. will concentrate on themes concerning punishment, on who is most liable to it, the limited meaning of 'eternal punishment' for a Platonist, and the relationship between punishment and purification.

<sup>1000</sup> Homer does not mention Thersites in his *nekuia* (*Od.* 11.576). Plato (*Grg.* 525d6) refers to Homer's testimony and to Thersites, but not to Odysseus. Ol. is clearly elaborating on Plato's text. Note also how Socrates speaks of liberty (ἐξουσία) not power (δύναμις), though he twice employs δυνάστης/δύναμαι, which enables Ol. to use it for his theme of the powerlessness of the wretched.

<sup>1001</sup> W. cites Heraclitus (*QH* 28.11-20) and Eustathius (on *Od.* 11.575 and 577) as parallels for the interpretation of Tityus' punishment; for that of Sisyphus, *ibid.* 11.592; but Eustathius is himself drawing on Neoplatonist traditions.

pick; but the fruit disappeared. This picture signifies a life of imaginings, and [the fruit] signifies something slippery and insubstantial and soon to come to an end.

50.2. He says that in that place Rhadamanthys judges the great king (the great king is the king of the Persians), for he says that Rhadamanthys judges those from Asia, and the king of the Persians ruled Asia.

The question was once raised 'Why does he say that Rhadamanthys and Minos are the judges of Asia, when one is a Libyan and the other a Cretan?' Reply 'The reason is that [he speaks] in accordance with the geographers who divide our world into two, Asia and Europe, in which case Libya and Crete are located in Asia'.<sup>1002</sup>

Note that souls who have committed modest wrongdoing are subject to judgment for a little time, then after purification proceed. When I say 'proceed', I do not mean physically, but through life; for indeed Plotinus says 'the soul proceeds not by foot but by life'.<sup>1003</sup> Souls who have committed very great wrongdoing are sent 'straightaway' to Tartarus. That means 'very swiftly': he says 'straightaway' since the straight line is the shortest of those [routes] which have the same beginning and end. And these souls are subject to judgment 'for ever', never to be purified. It is worth asking why he says 'for ever'. What? Is there never to be a cessation of punishment?<sup>1004</sup> Note that it is necessary for us to be converted by

<sup>1002</sup> Such geographers, who apparently included Anaximander and the Hippocratic author of *De Aer*, were known to Herodotus (4.36).

<sup>1003</sup> This is not a quotation from the *Enneads*: W. cites 1.6.8 (the flight to our own dear country is not by foot), but reference to 'life' is not obvious in context. The tale about Plotinus' unusually memorable saying is found also in the scholion on *Grg.* 507d, which presumably has a source other than Ol. (who has no corresponding material there). In her note on this scholion Carbonara Naddei refers to *Enn.* 4.4.16. However, it is plausible that we have here an anecdote preserved by one of Plotinus' followers.

<sup>1004</sup> Cf. 24.5. Late Neoplatonists regularly objected to the notion of eternal punishment: Dam. *In Phd.* 1.492, 2.147 suggests the influence of Syrianus supplanting that of Iamblichus ('Why do those who have lived incurably never depart from Tartarus? Either it is a constitutional (πολιτικῶς) falsehood, so that souls will beware of committing incurable wrongdoing, or the 'never' refers to one great circulation (μὴν περίοδον): the latter was the view of Syrianus', 147). Proclus continues in the same vein, *In Remp.* 2.178.1ff., and Ol. *In Phd.* 10.14 agrees, like the present passage, with Syrianus' solution. Ol.'s own discussion on the way to read the myth's merciless eternal punishment of 'incurables' builds upon a detail of Plato's myth, turning it into a Platonist theory of punishment. Note the emphasis: better to believe in the mortality of the soul than the eternity of punishment. Cf. Dodds ad loc. on

pain, since the passions are [active] through desire for pleasure, and opposites are healed by opposites.<sup>1005</sup> Yet certainly we are not punished for ever. It would be better to say that the soul is mortal than to maintain this. For if the soul is punished for all time and never enjoys the good, then it is for ever in a state of vice. And yet above all punishment aims at some good.<sup>1006</sup> So it must not remain for all time in a state contrary to nature, but must instead proceed to what is in accordance with nature. So if punishment brings us no benefit and does not lead us toward what is better, then it is imposed in vain, but neither God nor nature does anything in vain.<sup>1007</sup> What then does his phrase 'for ever' mean?

50.3. We say there are seven spheres, that of the moon and that of the sun and the others, and that of the fixed stars is eighth.<sup>1008</sup> Now the restoration of the moon's [sphere] occurs rather swiftly, for it takes 30 days. That of the sun is slower, taking a year. Still slower is that of Zeus, taking 12 years. Much slower is that of Cronus, taking 30 years. So the heavenly bodies are not restored to the same position relative to each other,<sup>1009</sup> except occasionally. So the sphere of Zeus and the sphere of Cronus are restored to the same position relative to each other every 60 years. For if the sphere of Zeus is restored to the same point every 12 years, and that of Cronus every 30, then it is clear that in the time Zeus revolves five times Cronus revolves twice, and 60 is twice 30 and 60 is five times 12, so they are restored to the same position every 60 years. Now souls are punished for the length of such a rotation. And the seven spheres are restored to the same position relative to the fixed stars, but [only] once in many tens of thousands of years.

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how Plato seems to mellow on this question in works later than *Grg.* Ol., as a Platonist, attempts to interpret Plato consistently and generously. There may be an element of anti-Christian polemic.

<sup>1005</sup> Cf. 46.9, 47.7.

<sup>1006</sup> On the rationale behind punishment cf. 22.1, 24.5. The Platonic principle that punishment should always be for some benefit is perhaps most clearly expressed by the character 'Protagoras' (*Prt.* 324a-b).

<sup>1007</sup> Ol. omits that Socrates denies benefit to serious wrongdoers (the incurables), making them simply an example (525c). The principle that neither God nor nature does anything in vain is widespread in Aristotle, and W. singles out *Cael.* 271a33.

<sup>1008</sup> This and what follows are a commonplace of Platonic astronomy; W. chooses to refer to *Tim.* 39c-d with Proclus' comments at *In Tim.* 3.91.1-94.3; also *In Remp.* 2.16.3-19.17, *Aet. Plac.* 2.32, and *Macrob. Somn.* 2.10-11.

<sup>1009</sup> συναποκατάστασις; a technical astronomical term, meaning return to same relative position as another star.

Now it is the length of the rotation it takes for the seven spheres to be restored to the same position relative to the fixed stars that he calls 'ever'. The souls of parricides or matricides or suchlike are punished 'for ever', i.e. 'for the length of this rotation'. Suppose someone says 'If a parricide dies today, and after six months, years or even days have elapsed the seven spheres are restored to the same position relative to the fixed stars, are they punished just for that length of time?'<sup>1010</sup> Answer 'That is not what I maintain, but that they are punished for the number of years that it takes for a restoration to the same position. For example if the restoration to the same position takes a thousand years, then, whenever he dies, he is punished for a thousand years'. He calls the duration of this rotation 'ever', for it is impossible to be punished without limit.<sup>1011</sup>

So the soul of itself reverts back to its (true) self,<sup>1012</sup> though it is a gradual process, and thereafter in accordance with its individual worth it receives once again an organic home in this world.<sup>1013</sup> They receive their organs of one kind or another, whether maimed, disabled, or whatever, to match their previous constitution. Note, too, that a spiritual garment is fastened to the soul.<sup>1014</sup> And this too is punished by being over-heated or cooled, and one may say that it is things of that sort that they are imagining when in terror of 'the maidens covered in blood', as the tragic poet says,<sup>1015</sup> and so forth.

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<sup>1010</sup> A characteristically tricky scholastic question, perhaps originally asked by a sceptic, but now more likely to be used by Christian defenders of eternal punishment. It is clear that Ol. is treating the issue as a matter of contemporary debate.

<sup>1011</sup> The concept of punishment as a corrective to the passions (22.1) ensures that it must end, properly speaking, when the passions are extinguished.

<sup>1012</sup> 50.4 will explain why this reversion must be brought about of the soul's own volition.

<sup>1013</sup> Ol. interprets *Grg.* myth in the light of transmigratory theses from other Platonic myths; this is certainly invited and possibly necessary, cf. Dodds on 525c.

<sup>1014</sup> Closely related to the soul's vehicle or 'chariot' in late Neoplatonism (see on 47.7) is the concept of its garments, Proc. *In Remp.* 2.159.6-10, *In Tim.* 3.298.2ff.; the soul may put on a variety of 'garments', luminous, spiritual, and shell-like; see Ol. *In Alc.* 107.8-11, cf. schol. *Grg.* 523e. For the spiritual garment see also Dam. *In Phd.* 1.168, 239, 528 (121, 143, 199 Norvin); Proc. *In Tim.* 3.238.20, postulates a spiritual chariot.

<sup>1015</sup> Eur. *Or.* 256, where Orestes is referring to the Furies.

50.4. Grasp this point too: those who need purifying are punished not only in that place, but also in this world, and sometimes they are purified here, *because* they were not purified there. Note that punishment makes [the soul] more temperate and more suitable for purification.<sup>1016</sup> For nothing can actually purify it except a recognition and a return to itself,<sup>1017</sup> which is brought about by virtue. For this is why virtue too is said to be something that is choiceworthy and preferred for its own sake. So do not think that punishment purifies it.<sup>1018</sup> For if were punished but did not return [to itself], it would not have been purified. So when it remains sober and returns to itself *as an autonomous agent*, then it is purified. For a doctor also purifies a diseased body and is not satisfied with purification; rather the sick man thereafter becomes responsible for his own health by looking after himself and not getting out of line and making unhelpful mistakes in his diet.

And furthermore, just as one who proceeds from health to disease forgets much of what he did when healthy, and on returning to health again remembers, so too the soul when it comes here forgets the punishments in that place and so goes astray.<sup>1019</sup> For if it always maintained consciousness, then it would not go astray. So note that forgetting is granted to the soul for a good reason. For if it remembered and through fear did not go astray, then it would clearly have been through fear that the soul adhered to the good and not on account of its own good condition and as an autonomous agent. So it forgets, in order that it might seek the good as an autonomous being. For we also feel warmly towards our servants and think they deserve more generous clothing, not those who serve us through fear, but those who do so from their own volition.

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<sup>1016</sup> The distinction between punishment and purification is predictable if we consider the relationships between (i) *Grg.* and the constitutional virtues, which are intimately linked with the passions and their control; and (ii) *Phd.* and the purificatory virtues. *Phd.* follows *Grg.* in the post-Iamblichian curriculum because purificatory virtues follow the constitutional ones. Hence punishment, which controls passions and restores one's 'constitution', prepares for purification, but does not in itself achieve it.

<sup>1017</sup> Translating W.'s suggested text (ἡ γνώσις καὶ ἡ ἐπιστροφή), for even if the reading ἐπίγνωσις is correct, it would clearly involve the twin concepts of reversion and cognition.

<sup>1018</sup> Ol. has to have some means of allowing that souls in this life may deserve their harsh fates because of crimes from a previous life, cf. 19.2-3.

<sup>1019</sup> Arist. fr. 41R, = Proc. *In Remp.* 2.349.13-20 (for forgetfulness of the other world is a topic most naturally emerging from the myth of *Rep.*, see 621a); cf. also Ol. *In Phd.* 12.2.

So note that punishment occurs here too, but it seems to be chiefly there that they are purified, since bodiless life is more their natural condition.

If someone were to say 'Why is it only the powerful who are punished, and not also beggars who are disposed to do wrong? For if beggars had resources for the purpose, such as wealth and so forth, they would also themselves go astray', then our position is that if their policy is unjust, they too are punished, but the measures are different. For one who merely has the policy is punished differently from one who also puts it into practice.

So Socrates says to Callicles 'These stories are considered myths by you, but they are true accounts. For neither Gorgias nor Polus nor you nor anyone else is able to contravert them. So if they have prevailed, let us depend on them like a secure anchor. So attend, Callicles, lest you get a beating in that place and a blow on the head'. [Socrates] says this to him, since earlier he had said to Socrates 'You are playing and will be boxed on the ears'.<sup>1020</sup> Being struck in this world is nothing, if it contributes to our finding divine release in that place.

50.5. **'He examines each man's soul'** (524e2): i.e. 'he attends to [a person's] conscience'. For he does not inquire into who he is (i.e. whether he is nobly or ignobly born, nor whether he is rich or poor), nor from what sort of parents (i.e. from noble or ignoble parents, or from bad or good), but he inquires into his actions.

50.6. **'And everything was crooked'** (525a2): for a soul that has been soiled and has been wounded by its passions has nothing straight—but everything crooked.

50.7. **'To become an example to the rest'** (525b2-3): for by suffering the soul is both improved itself and becomes an example to those who view it, for a ruler may also have punishments carried out in public, so that those who watch may become more temperate.

50.8. **'If what Polus says is true'** (525d1-2): note how safe this claim is. For if he is unjust in the way Polus describes, then such a man is not happy, but pays the penalty.

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<sup>1020</sup> Reading τυθήση for τύπη. 'Ol. shows himself alert to the way Socrates throws Callicles' words (486c3) back in his face' (Dodds, 1959). However Dodds should not so much be thinking solely of 486c but rather of 485c2 and d2, where Callicles says that juvenile conduct like philosophy deserves a beating, (even though the key term κόπη does not occur there).

50.9. **'Still nothing prevents good men from appearing even among those'** (526a2): since he is speaking of men in power, someone might say 'What? Is there nobody in power who is of good constitution?' To this he says 'Yes, nothing prevents men in power too from being of good constitution, and we must admire them, Callicles. For it is admirable that they should have great resources, and yet despise them and be of divine constitution. Fine men have come to power and will continue to do so. That's how even among the Greeks Aristides son of Lysimachus was a fine leader'. Observe that [Socrates] praises him, not however as a statesman, but as someone who surpassed the others. But it is clear that not even he reached the summit as a statesman, because he also suffered some misfortune, and because the comedy says about him 'there was no chick of Aristides'.<sup>1021</sup>

50.10. **'And one of them has become widely famous'** (526b1): he uses the term 'widely famous' not, in accordance with normal usage, for someone who knows many things, but for someone worthwhile.<sup>1022</sup>

50.11. **'Holds a staff'** (526c6): by the staff is signified the straight and equitable character of justice. For there is nothing unjust in that place.

50.12. **'With a gold staff'** (526c7): again the staff indicates equity. And 'gold' stands for 'immaterial'. For equity is immaterial since it is separated from all profit. And the immaterial is signified by the gold, since only gold does not tarnish, whereas this happens to all other material things.<sup>1023</sup>

50.13. **'And I call all other men'** (526e1): the Socratic good covers all men and he wants each man to be of good constitution.

50.14. **'The son of Aegina'** (527a1): he adds the [reference to] Aegina, since Callicles too was from Aegina.<sup>1024</sup>

50.15. **'Only this argument is stable'** (527b3-4): i.e. 'it remains unshaken, refuted by no one'.

50.16. **'For nothing serious will happen to you'** (527d1): 'You will not come to harm by being struck in this place'.

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<sup>1021</sup> W. (1966) relates this comic fragment to the *Demes* of Eupolis in which a resurrected Aristides speaks, and compares particularly fr. 99K = 111PCG.

<sup>1022</sup> Ol. comments on the same term at 40.8.

<sup>1023</sup> Ol. must mean all other metals, as the marginal note says.

<sup>1024</sup> W. cites Pindar *Nem.* 4.80, where the name of a Callicles does indeed occur.



50.17. **‘Then let us follow this account’** (527e5): ‘we must follow this account as a leader who has been defeated by no one, and then come what may, both in this place and in that, we shall live well.’

**Commentary on the *Gorgias* from the words of the great philosopher Olympiodorus**



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